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5. As soon as there are four members in any place, put them into a society.

6. Suffer no love-feast to last above a week.

7. Warn all from time to time to remove from one circuit to another with a recommendation from the Elder or Deacon, in these words: *A. B. the bearer, has been an acceptable member of our society in C.* and inform them, that without such a certificate, they will not be received into other societies.

8. Every where recommend decency and cleanliness.

9. Read the rules of the Society, with the aid of the Preachers, once a year, in every congregation, and once a quarter in every society.

10. On any dispute between two or more of the members of our society, which cannot be settled by the parties concerned, the Deacon shall inquire into the circumstances of the case, and having consulted the elders and leaders, shall, if agreeable to their advice, recommend to the contending parties a reference consisting of one arbiter, chosen by the plaintiff, and another by the defendant; which two arbiters so chosen shall nominate a third (the three arbiters being members of our society) and the decision of any two of them shall be final. But if either of the parties refuse to abide by such decision, he shall be immediately expelled.

*N. B.* If any member of our society enter into a lawsuit with another member before these measures are taken, he shall be expelled.

No Deacon that ceases to travel without the consent of the Conference, certified under the hand of a Bishop, shall on any account exercise the peculiar functions of his office.

## T I O N VI.

*of receiving Preachers, and  
their Duty.*

*Quest.* 1. **H**OW is a Preacher to be received?

*Ans.* 1. By the Conference.  
2. In the interval of the Conference, by the Bishop, or an Elder, until the sitting of the Conference.

3. When his name is not printed in the Minutes, he must receive a written licence from his Elder or Bishop.

*Quest.* 1. What is the duty of a Preacher?

1. To preach.
2. To meet the societies, or classes and bands.
3. To visit the sick.
4. To meet the leaders.
5. To preach in the morning, where he can get hearers.

*N. B.* We are fully determined never to drop morning-preaching, and to preach at five o'clock in the summer, and six in the winter, wherever it is practicable.

*Quest.* 3. Are the Preachers to read our liturgy?

*Ans.* All that have received a written direction for that purpose, under the hand of a Bishop or Elder, may read the liturgy as often as they think it expedient.

*Quest.* 4. What are the directions given to a Preacher?

*Ans.* 1. Be diligent. Never be unemployed; never be triflingly employed. Never trifle away time; neither spend any more time at any place than is strictly necessary.

2. Be serious. Let your motto be, *holiness to the Lord*. Avoid all lightness, jesting, and foolish talking.

3. Converse

To the Members of the Methodist Societies

the United States  
EMORY

DEARLY BELOVED BRETHREN

LIBRARY AND READING ROOM

W E think it expedient to give you a brief account of the rise of Methodism (so called) both in Europe and America. In 1729, two young men, in England, reading the Bible, saw that they could not be saved by holiness alone, but that men are justified before they are sanctified: But still holiness was their object. God then thrust them out, to raise an holy people.

And during the space of thirty years past, certain persons, members of the society, emigrated from England and Ireland, and settled in various parts of this country. In the latter end of the year 1766, Philip Embury, a local preacher from Ireland, began to preach in the city of New-York, and formed a society of his own countrymen and the citizens. In the same year, Thomas Webb preached in a hired room, near the barracks; and in the year 1767, the riggin house was occupied. About the same time, Robert Strawbridge, a local preacher from Ireland, settled in Frederic county, in the state of Maryland, and preaching there, formed some societies. The first Methodist church in New-York was built in 1768 or 1769; and in 1769, Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor came to New-York; who were the first regular Methodist Preachers on the continent. In the latter end of the year 1771, Francis Asbury and Richard Wright, of the same order, came over.

And we humbly believe that God's design in raising up the preachers called Methodists in America, was to reform the continent, and spread scripture holiness over these lands. As a proof hereof, we have seen, the course of 22 years, a great and glorious work of God, from New-York through the Jerseys, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia, North and South-Carolina and Georgia; as also the extremities of the Settlements.

We also esteem it our duty and privilege most earnestly to recommend to *you* as members of our church, our FORM OF DISCIPLINE, which has been founded on the experience of 50 years in Europe, and of 20 years in America; as also on the observations and remarks we have made on ancient and modern churches. We have made some little alterations in the present edition, yet such as affect not in any degree the essentials of our doctrines and discipline. We think ourselves obliged to view and review annually the whole order of our church, always aiming at perfection, standing on the shoulders of those who have lived before us, and taking the advantage of our former selves.

We wish to see this little publication in the house of every Methodist, and the more so as it contains our plan of Collegiate and Christian education, and the articles of religion maintained more or less, in part or in the whole, by every reformed church in the world. We would likewise declare our real sentiments concerning the scripture doctrine of election and reprobation; as also on the infallible, unconditional perseverance of all that ever have believed, or ever shall; and, lastly, on the doctrine of Christian perfection.

Far from wishing you to be ignorant of any of our doctrines, or any part of our discipline, we desire you to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest the whole. We know you are not in general able to purchase many books: But you ought, next to the word of God, to procure the Articles and Canons of the church to which you belong. This present edition is small and cheap, and we can assure you that the profits of the sale of it shall be applied to charitable purposes.

We remain your very affectionate brethren and pastors, who labour night and day, both in public and private, for your good,

THOMAS COKE,  
FRANCIS ASBURY.

## SECTION I.

### *Of the Method of holding a Conference, and the Business to be done therein.*

**I**T is desired that all things be considered as in the immediate presence of God. That every person speak freely whatever is in his heart.

*Quest.* 1. How may we best improve our time at the Conference?

*Answ.* While we are conversing, let us have an especial care to set God always before us.

2. In the intermediate hours, let us redeem all the time we can for private exercises.

3. Therein let us give ourselves to prayer for one another, and for a blessing on our labour.

*Quest.* 2. What is the method wherein we usually proceed in a Conference?

*Answ.* We enquire,

1. What Preachers are admitted?
2. Who remain on trial?
3. Who are admitted on trial?
4. Who desist from travelling?
5. Are there any objections to any of the Preachers? Who are named one by one.
6. How are the Preachers stationed this year?
7. What numbers are in society?
8. What is collected for the contingent expences?
9. How is this expended?
10. What is contributed towards the fund for the superannuated Preachers, and the widows and orphans of the Preachers?
11. What demands are there upon it?
12. Where and when shall our next Conference begin?

*Quest. 3.* Is there any other business to be done in the Conference?

*Answ.* The electing and ordaining of Bishops, Elders, and Deacons.

## SECTION II.

### *Of the Nature and Constitution of our Church.*

**W**E are thoroughly convinced, that the Church of England, to which we have been united, is deficient in several of the most important parts of Christian discipline; and that (a few ministers and members excepted) it has lost the life and power of religion. We are not ignorant of the spirit and designs it has ever discovered in Europe, of rising to pre-eminence and worldly dignities by virtue of a national establishment, and by the most servile devotion to the will of temporal governors: and we fear, the same spirit will lead the same church in these United States (though altered in its name) to similar designs and attempts, if the number and strength of its members will ever afford a probability of success; and particularly, to obtain a national establishment, which we cordially abhor as the great bane of truth and holiness, and consequently a great impediment to the progress of vital Christianity.

For these reasons, we have thought it our duty to form ourselves into an independent church. And as the most excellent mode of church-government, according to our maturest judgment, is that of a *moderate episcopacy*; and as we are persuaded, that the *uninterrupted succession of Bishops from the Apostles*, can be proved neither from scripture nor antiquity; we therefore have constituted ourselves into an *Episcopal church*, under the direction of *Bishops, Elders, Deacons, and Preachers*, according to the forms of ordination annexed

nexed to our prayer-book, and the regulations laid down in the form of discipline.

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## S E C T I O N III.

### *Of the constituting of Bishops, and their Duty.*

*Quest. 1.* **W**HAT is the proper origin of the Episcopal authority in our church?

*Ans.* In the year 1784, the Rev. John Wesley, who, under God, has been the father of the great revival of religion now extending over the earth by the means of the Methodists, determined at the intercession of multitudes of his spiritual children on this continent, to ordain ministers for America, and for this purpose sent over three regularly-ordained clergy: but preferring the episcopal mode of church-government to any other, he solemnly set apart by the imposition of his hands and prayer, one of them, viz. Thomas Coke, Doctor of Civil Law, late of Jesus College, in the University of Oxford, for the episcopal office; and having delivered to him letters of episcopal orders, commissioned and directed him to set apart Francis Asbury, then general assistant of the Methodist society in America, for the same episcopal office, he the said Francis Asbury being first ordained Deacon and Elder. In consequence of which, the said Francis Asbury was solemnly set apart for the said episcopal office, by prayer and the imposition of the hands of the said Thomas Coke, other regularly-ordained Ministers assisting in the sacred ceremony. At which time the general Conference held at Baltimore did unanimously receive the said Thomas Coke and Francis Asbury as their Bishops, being fully satisfied of the validity of their episcopal ordination.

*Quest. 2.* How is a Bishop to be constituted in future?

*Ans.*

*Answ.* By the election of a majority of the Conference, and the laying on of the hands of a Bishop.

*Quest.* 3. What is his duty?

*Answ.* To preside as moderator in our Conferences; to fix the appointments of the Preachers for the several circuits; and in the intervals of the Conference, to change, receive, or suspend Preachers, as necessity may require; to travel through as many circuits as he can, and to direct in the spiritual business of the societies; as also to ordain Bishops, Elders, and Deacons.

*N. B.* The Bishop has obtained liberty, by the suffrages of the Conference, to ordain local Preachers to the office of Deacons, provided they obtain a testimonial from the society to which they belong, and from the stewards of the circuit, signed by three travelling Preachers, three Deacons, and three Elders (one of them being a presiding Elder;) the names of those nominated being read in the conference previous to their ordination.

*Quest.* 4. To whom is the Bishop amenable for his conduct?

*Answ.* To the Conference, who have power to expel him for improper conduct, if they see it necessary.

*Quest.* 5. If the Bishop ceases from travelling at large among the people, shall he still exercise his office among us in any degree?

*Answ.* If he ceases from travelling without the consent of the Conference, he shall not hereafter exercise any ministerial function whatsoever in our church.

## SECTION IV.

### *Of the constituting of Elders, and their Duty.*

*Quest.* 1. **H**OW is an *Elder* constituted?

*Answ.* By the election of a majority of the Conference, and by the laying on of the hands of a Bishop, and of the Elders that are present.

*Quest.*

*Quest.* 2. What is his duty?

*Ans.* 1. To travel through his appointed district.

2. To administer baptism and the Lord's supper; and to perform all parts of divine service.

3. In the absence of a Bishop, to take charge of all the Deacons, travelling and local Preachers, and exhorters.

4. To change, receive, or suspend Preachers.

5. To direct in the transaction of the spiritual business of his circuit.

6. To take care that every part of our discipline be enforced.

7. To aid in the public collections.

8. To attend his Bishop when present, and give him when absent all necessary information, by letter, of the state of his district.

*N. B.* No Elder that ceases to travel, without the consent of the Conference, certified under the hand of a Bishop, shall on any account exercise the peculiar functions of his office amongst us.

## SECTION V.

### *Of the constituting of Deacons, and their Duty.*

*Quest.* 1. **H**OW is a Deacon constituted?

*Ans.* By the election of a majority of the Conference, and the laying on of the hands of a Bishop.

*Quest.* 2. What is the duty of a Deacon?

*Ans.* 1. To baptize, and perform the office of matrimony in the absence of the Elder.

2. To assist the Elder in administering the Lord's supper.

3. To see that the other Preachers in his circuit behave well, and want nothing.

4. To

4. To renew the tickets quarterly, and regulate the bands.

5. To appoint all the stewards and leaders, and change them when he sees it necessary.

6. To hold watch-nights and love-feasts.

7. To hold quarterly meetings, and therein diligently to enquire both into the temporal and spiritual state of each society.

8. To take care that every society be duly supplied with books: particularly with the SAINT'S REST, INSTRUCTIONS FOR CHILDREN, and the PRIMITIVE PHYSIC; which ought to be in every house.

9. To take an exact account of the numbers in society, and bring it to the Conference.

10. To send an account of his circuit every quarter to his elder.

11. To meet the men and women apart in the large societies, once a quarter.

12. To overlook the accounts of all the stewards.

13. To appoint a person to receive the quarterly collection in *the classes*, and to be present at the time of receiving it.

14. To see that *public* collections be made quarterly, if need be.

15. To move a yearly subscription through those circuits that can bear it, for building churches.

16. To chuse a committee of lay-members, to make a just application of the money, where it is most wanted.

*Quest.* 3. What other directions shall we give the Deacons?

*Ans.* Several:

1. Take a regular catalogue of the societies in towns and cities, as they live in streets.

2. Leave your successor a particular account of the state of the circuit.

3. See that every band-leader have the rules of the bands.

4. Vigorously, but calmly, enforce the rules concerning needless ornaments and drams.

5. As

3. Converse sparingly and cautiously with women.  
1 Timothy, v. 2.

4. Take no step towards marriage without first consulting with your brethren.

5. Believe evil of no one; unless you see it done, take heed how you credit it. Put the best construction on every thing. You know the judge is always supposed to be on the prisoner's side.

6. Speak evil of no one; else your word especially would eat as doth a canker. Keep your thoughts within your own breast, till you come to the person concerned.

7. Tell every one under your care, what you think wrong in his conduct and temper, and that plainly as soon as may be: else it will fester in your heart. Make all haste to cast the fire out of your bosom.

8. Do not affect the gentleman. A Preacher of the gospel is the servant of all.

9. Be ashamed of nothing but sin.

10. Be punctual. Do every thing exactly at the time. And do not mend our rules, but keep them; not for wrath, but conscience sake: not for fear of punishment, but for conscience sake.

11. You have nothing to do but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work. And go always not only to those that want, but to those that want you most.

Observe! It is not your business to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that society only: But to save as many souls as you can; to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance, and with all your power to build them up in that holiness, without which they cannot see the Lord. And remember! A Methodist Preacher is to mind every point, great and small, in the Methodist discipline! Therefore you will need to exercise all the sense and grace you have.

12. Act in all things, not according to your own will, but as a son in the gospel. As such it is your duty to employ your time in the manner which we direct: in preaching and visiting from house to house:

in reading, meditation, and prayer. Above all, if you labour with us in the Lord's vineyard, it is needful you should do that part of the work which we advise, at those times and places which we judge most for his glory.

*Quest.* 5. What method do we use in receiving a Preacher at the Conference?

*Ans.* After solemn fasting and prayer, every person proposed shall then be asked, before the Conference, the following questions (with any others which may be thought necessary) viz. Have you faith in Christ? Are you going on to perfection? Do you expect to be made perfect in love in this life? Are you groaning after it? Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God and his work? Do you know the rules of the society? Of the bands? Do you keep them? Do you constantly attend the sacrament? Have you read the form of discipline? Are you willing to conform to it? Have you considered the rules of a Preacher; especially the first, tenth, and twelfth? Will you keep them for conscience sake? Are you determined to employ all your time in the work of God? Will you endeavour not to speak too long or too loud? Will you diligently instruct the children in every place? Will you visit from house to house? Will you recommend fasting or abstinence, both by precept and example? Are you in debt?

We may then, if he gives satisfaction, receive him as a probationer, by giving him the form of discipline, inscribed thus: To A. B. "*You think it your duty to call sinners to repentance. Make full proof hereof, and we shall rejoice to receive you as a fellow-labourer.*" Let him then carefully read and weigh what is contained therein; that if he has any doubt, it may be removed. Observe! Taking on trial is entirely different from admitting a Preacher. One on trial, may be either admitted or rejected, without doing him any wrong; otherwise it would be no trial at all. Let every Deacon and Elder explain this to those who are on trial,

as well as to those who are in future to be proposed for trial.

After two years' probation, being recommended by the Elders and Deacons present, and examined by the Bishop, he may be received into full connection, by giving him the form of discipline, inscribed thus: *As long as you freely consent to, and earnestly endeavour to walk by these rules, we shall rejoice to acknowledge you as a fellow-labourer.*

*N. B.* Let none who are *local*, preach or exhort in any of our societies, without a note of permission from the Deacon: Let every local Preacher or Exhorter take care to have this renewed yearly: And let every Elder insist upon it.

## S E C T I O N VII.

*Of the Collections that are to be made, and how the Money is to be expended.*

*Quest.* 1. **H**OW many collections are to be made in a year?

*Ans.* 1. A quarterly collection from the members of the society, to supply the Preachers; and when that is deficient, a public quarterly collection: If there be any overplus, let one third of it be reserved for future deficiencies; one third be given to the poor in general; and one third applied to the building or improving of our churches. If there is money left in the hands of the stewards at the close of the year, let it be sent to the Conference.

2. A yearly collection from all our members that are of ability, for the building of convenient churches.

3. A collection at love-feasts, and on sacramental occasions, for the poor of our own society.

4. *Am*

4. An annual collection or subscription for the college.

5. An annual public collection for the contingencies of the Conference; which shall be applied,

1. To discharge the deficiencies of those Preachers, who shall not have received their full salary in their circuits: And,

2. To defray the expences of our missions to distant parts of the continent.

*Quest.* 2. What is the regular annual salary of the Bishops, Elders, Deacons, and Preachers?

*Answ.* Twenty-four pounds Pennsylvania currency, and their travelling-expences.

*Quest.* 3. What shall be annually allowed the wives of the married Preachers?

*Answ.* Twenty-four pounds Pennsylvania currency, if they are in want of it.

*N. B.* That no ministers or Preachers, travelling or local, shall receive any support either in money or other provision for their services, without the knowledge of the stewards of the circuits, and its being properly entered quarterly on the books.

## S E C T I O N VIII.

### *Of Class-Meeting.*

*Quest.* 1. **H**OW may the leaders of classes be rendered more useful?

*Answ.* 1. Let each of them be diligently examined concerning his method of meeting a class. Let this be done with all possible exactness, at least once a quarter. In order to this, take sufficient time.

2. Let each leader carefully enquire how every soul in his class prospers: Not only how each person observes the outward rules, but how he grows in the knowledge and love of God.

3. Let

3. Let the leaders converse with the Elder and Deacon frequently and freely.

*Quest.* 2. Can any thing more be done in order to make the class-meetings lively and profitable?

*Ans.* 1. Change improper leaders.

2. Let the leaders frequently meet each other's classes.

3. Let us observe which leaders are the most useful: And let these meet the other classes as often as possible.

4. See that all the leaders be not only men of sound judgment, but men truly devoted to God.

*Quest.* 3. How shall we prevent improper persons from insinuating themselves into the society?

*Ans.* 1. Give tickets to none until they are recommended by a leader, with whom they have met at least six months on trial.

2. Give notes to none but those who are recommended by one you know, or until they have met three or four times in a class.

3. Read the rules to them the first time they meet.

*Quest.* 4. How shall we be more strict in receiving and excluding members?

*Ans.* In large societies we may read the names of those that are received and excluded, once a quarter.

*Quest.* 5. What shall we do with those members of society, who wilfully and repeatedly neglect to meet their class?

*Ans.* 1. Let the Elder, Deacon, or one of the Preachers, visit them, whenever it is practicable, and explain to them the consequence if they continue to neglect, viz. Exclusion.

2. If they do not amend, let the Elder exclude them in the society; shewing that they are laid aside for a breach of our rules of discipline, and not for immoral conduct.

## SECTION IX.

*Of the Band Societies.*

*Two, three, or four true believers, who have full confidence in each other, form a band. Only it is to be observed, that in one of these Bands all must be men, or all women; and all married or all single.*

[Rules of the Band Societies, drawn up Dec. 25, 1738.]

**T**HE design of our meeting is to obey that command of GOD, *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that you may be healed.*

To this end, we intend,

1. To meet once a week, at the least.
2. To come punctually at the hour appointed, without some extraordinary reason.
3. To begin (those of us who are present) exactly at the hour with singing or prayer.
4. To speak, each of us in order, freely and plainly, the true state of our souls, with the faults we have committed in thought, word, or deed, and the temptations we have felt since our last meeting.
5. To end every meeting with prayer, suited to the state of each person present.
6. To desire some person among us to speak HIS own state first, and then to ask the rest in order, as many and as searching questions as may be, concerning their state, sins, and temptations.

Some of the questions proposed to every one before HE is admitted among us, may be to this effect:

1. Have you the forgiveness of your sins?
2. Have you peace with GOD, through our LORD JESUS CHRIST?
3. Have you the witness of GOD's Spirit with your Spirit, that you are a child of God?
4. Is the love of GOD shed abroad in your heart?
5. Has

5. Has no sin, inward or outward, dominion over you?

6. Do you desire to be told of your faults?

7. Do you desire to be told of all your faults, and that plain and home?

8. Do you desire, that every one of us should tell you, from time to time, whatsoever is in HIS heart concerning you?

9. Consider! Do you desire we should tell you whatsoever we think, whatsoever we fear, whatsoever we hear, concerning you?

10. Do you desire, that in doing this we should come as close as possible, that we should cut to the quick, and search your heart to the bottom?

11. Is it your desire and design to be on this and all other occasions entirely open, so as to speak every thing that is in your heart, without exception, without disguise, and without reserve?

Any of the preceding questions may be asked as often as occasion offers: The five following at every meeting.

1. What known sins have you committed since our last meeting?

2. What temptations have you met with?

3. How was you delivered?

4. What have you thought, said, or done, of which you doubt whether it be sin or not?

5. Have you nothing you desire to keep secret?

## DIRECTIONS *given to the BAND SOCIETIES.*

*December 25th, 1744.*

**Y**OU are supposed to have the *Faith that overcometh the world.* To you therefore it is not grievous,

I. Carefully to abstain from doing evil: in particular,

1. Neither to *buy* nor *sell* any thing at all on the LORD's day.

2. To

2 To taste no spirituous liquor, *no dram* of any kind, unless prescribed by a physician.

3. To be *at a word* both in buying and selling.

4. To *pawn nothing*.

5. Not to *mention the fault* of any *behind his back*, and to stop those short that do.

6. To wear no *needless ornaments*, such as rings, ear-rings, necklaces, lace, ruffles.

7. To use no *needless self-indulgence*; such as taking snuff or tobacco, unless prescribed by a physician.

II. Zealously to maintain good Works; in particular,

1. To *give alms* of such things as you possess, and that to the uttermost of your power.

2. To *reprove* all that sin in your sight, and that in love, and meekness of wisdom.

3. To be patterns of *diligence* and *frugality*, of *self-denial*, and taking up the cross daily.

III. Constantly to attend on all the ordinances of God; in particular,

1. To be at church, and at the LORD's table every week, and at every public meeting of the Bands.

2. To attend the ministry of the word every morning, unless distance, business, or sickness prevent.

3. To use private prayer every day, and family prayer, if you are the head of a family.

4. To read the Scriptures, and meditate thereon, at every vacant hour. And,

5. To observe, as days of fasting or abstinence, all *Fridays* in the year.

## SECTION X.

*Of the Duty of Preachers to God, themselves,  
and one another.*

Quest. 1. **H**OW shall a Preacher be qualified for his charge? *Answer.*

*Ans.* By walking closely with God, and having his work greatly at heart: And by understanding and loving discipline, ours in particular.

*Quest.* 2. Do we sufficiently watch over each other?

*Ans.* We do not. Should we not frequently ask each other, Do you walk closely with God? Have you now fellowship with the Father and the Son? At what hour do you rise? Do you punctually observe the morning and evening hour of retirement, viz. Five o'clock? Do you spend the day in the manner which the Conference advises? Do you converse seriously, usefully, and closely? To be more particular: Do you use all the means of grace yourself, and enforce the use of them on all other persons? They are either instituted or prudential.

I. The instituted are,

1. Prayer; private, family, public; consisting of deprecation, petition, intercession, and thanksgiving. Do you use each of these? Do you forecast daily wherever you are, to secure time for private devotion? Do you practise it every where? Do you ask every where, Have you family-prayer? Do you ask individuals, Do you use private prayer every morning and evening in particular?

2. Searching the scriptures, by

(1) Reading; constantly, some part of every day: regularly, all the Bible in order: carefully, with notes: seriously, with prayer before and after: fruitfully, immediately practising what you learn there?

(2) Meditating: At set times? By rule?

(3) Hearing: Every opportunity? With prayer before, at, after? Have you a Bible always about you?

3. The Lord's Supper: Do you use this at every opportunity? With solemn prayer before? With earnest and deliberate self-devotion?

4. Fasting: Do you use as much abstinence and fasting every week, as your health, strength, and labour will permit?

5. Christian conference: Are you convinced how important and how difficult it is to order your conversation

fation aright? Is it always in grace? Seasoned with salt? Meet to minister grace to the hearers? Do you not converse too long at a time? Is not an hour commonly enough? Would it not be well always to have a determinate end in view? And to pray before and after it?

II. Prudential means we may use, either as Christians, as Methodists, as Preachers, or as Ministers.

1. As Christians: What particular rules have you in order to grow in grace? What arts of holy living?

2. As Methodists: Do you never miss your class or band?

3. As Ministers: Have you thoroughly considered your duty? And do you make a conscience of executing every part of it?

4. As Preachers: Do you meet every society? Also, the leaders and bands?

These means may be used without fruit. But there are some means which cannot; namely, watching, denying ourselves, taking up our cross, exercise of the presence of God.

1. Do you steadily watch against the world? Yourself? Your besetting sin?

2. Do you deny yourself every useless pleasure of sense? Imagination? Honour? Are you temperate in all things? Instance in food. (1) Do you use only that kind, and that degree, which is best both for your body and soul? Do you see the necessity of this? (2) Do you eat no flesh suppers? (3) Do you eat no more at each meal than is necessary? Are you not heavy or drowsy after dinner? (4) Do you use only that kind and that degree of drink which is best both for your body and soul? (5) Do you choose and use water for your common drink? And only take wine medicinally or sacramentally?

3. Wherein do you take up your cross daily? Do you cheerfully bear your cross (whatever is grievous to nature) as a gift of God, and labour to profit thereby?

4. Do you endeavour to set God always before you, to see his eye continually fixed upon you? Never  
can

can you use these means, but a blessing will ensue. And the more you use them, the more will you grow in grace.

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## SECTION XI.

*Of the Necessity of Union among ourselves.*

**L**ET us be deeply sensible (from what we have known) of the evil of a division in principle, spirit, or practice, and the dreadful consequences to ourselves and others. If we are united, what can stand before us? If we divide, we shall destroy ourselves, the work of God, and the souls of our people.

*Quest.* 1. What can be done in order to a closer union with each other?

*Ans.* 1. Let us be deeply convinced of the absolute necessity of it.

2. Pray earnestly for, and speak freely to each other.

3. When we meet, let us never part without prayer.

4. Take great care not to despise each other's gifts.

5. Never speak lightly of each other.

6. Let us defend each other's character in every thing, so far as is consistent with truth.

7. Labour, in honour, each to prefer the other before himself.

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## SECTION XII.

*Of the Trial of those who think they are moved by the Holy Ghost to preach.*

*Quest.* 1. **H**OW shall we try those who profess to be moved by the Holy Ghost to preach?

*Ans.*

*Ans.* 1. Let them be asked the following questions, viz. Do they know God as a pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire and seek nothing but God? And are they holy in all manner of conversation?

2. Have they gifts (as well as grace) for the work? Have they (in some tolerable degree) a clear, sound understanding, a right judgment in the things of God, a just conception of salvation by faith? And has God given them any degree of utterance? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly?

3. Have they fruit? Are any truly convinced of sin, and converted to God by their preaching?

As long as these three marks concur in any one, we believe he is called of God to preach. These we receive as sufficient proof that he is moved by the Holy Ghost.

## SECTION XIII.

### *Of the Spirit and Truth of Singing.*

*Quest.* 1. **H**OW shall we guard against formality in singing?

*Ans.* 1. By choosing such hymns as are proper for the congregation.

2. By not singing too much at once; seldom more than five or six verses.

3. By suiting the tune to the words.

4. By often stopping short, and asking the people, "Now Do you know what you said last? Did you speak no more than you felt?"

5. Do not suffer the people to sing too slow. This naturally tends to formality; and is brought in by those who have either very strong or very weak voices.

6. In every large society let them learn to sing; and let them always learn our tunes first.

7. Let

7. Let the women constantly sing their parts alone. Let no man sing with them, unless he understands the notes, and sings the bass as it is composed in the tune-book.

8. Introduce no new tune till they are perfect in the old.

9. Recommend our tune-book. And if you cannot sing yourself, chuse a person or two at each place to pitch the tune for you.

10. Exhort every person in the congregation to sing, not one in ten only.

11. Sing no hymns of your own composing.

12. If a Preacher be present, let him alone give out the words.

13. When the singers would teach a tune to the congregation, they must sing only the tenor.

## S E C T I O N   X I V .

*Rules by which we should continue, or desist  
from Preaching, at any Place.*

*Quest.* 1. **I**S it advisable for us to preach in as many places as we can, without forming any societies?

*Answ.* By no means: We have made the trial in various places; and that for a considerable time. But all the seed has fallen by the way-side. There is scarce any fruit remaining.

*Quest.* 2. Where should we endeavour to preach most?

*Answ.* 1. Where there are the greatest number of quiet and willing hearers.

2. Where there is the most fruit.

*Quest.* 3. Ought we not diligently to observe, in what places God is pleased at any time to pour out his Spirit more abundantly?

*Answ.* We ought: And at that time, to send more labourers than usual into that part of the harvest.

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## S E C T I O N XV.

### *Of the Matter and Manner of Preaching, and other public Exercises.*

*Quest.* 1. **W**HAT is the best general method of preaching?

*Answ.* 1. To convince: 2. To offer Christ: 3. To invite: 4. To build up: And to do this in some measure in every sermon.

*Quest.* 2. Are there any smaller advices relative to preaching, which might be of use to us?

*Answ.* Perhaps these: 1. Be sure never to disappoint a congregation. 2. Begin precisely at the time appointed. 3. Let your whole deportment be serious, weighty, and solemn. 4. Always suit your subject to your audience. 5. Chuse the plainest text you can. 6. Take care not to ramble, but keep to your text, and make out what you take in hand. 7. Take care of any thing awkward or affected, either in your gesture, phrase, or pronounciation. 8. Print nothing without the approbation of the Conference, and one of the Bishops. 9. Do not usually pray *ex tempore* above eight or ten minutes (at most) without intermission. 10. Frequently read and enlarge upon a portion of scripture; and let young preachers often exhort without taking a text. 11. Always avail yourself of the great festivals by preaching on the occasion.

*Quest.* 3. Have not some of us been led off from practical preaching by (what is called) preaching Christ?

*Answ.* The most effectual way of preaching Christ, is to preach him in all his offices; and to declare his law, as well as his gospel, both to believers and unbelievers. Let us strongly and closely insist upon inward and outward holiness in all its branches.

## SECTION XVI.

*Against Antinomianism.*

*Quest.* 1. **W**HAT can be done to guard against Antinomianism?

*Ans.* 1. Let all the preachers carefully read over Mr. Wesley's and Mr. Fletcher's tracts. 2. Let them frequently and explicitly preach the truth, but not in a controversial way. And let them take care to do it in love and gentleness: Not in bitterness, returning railing for railing. 3. Answer all the objections of our people as occasion offers: But take care to do it in a Christian temper.

*Quest.* 2. Wherein lies our danger of it?

*Ans.* 1. With regard to man's faithfulness, our Lord himself hath taught us to use the expression; therefore we ought never to be ashamed of it. We ought steadily to assert upon his authority, that if a man is not faithful in the unrighteous mammon, God will not give him the true riches.

2. With regard to working for life, which our Lord expressly commands us to do. Labour (*ergazesthe*) literally, *work for the meat that endureth to everlasting life*. And in fact, every believer till he comes to glory, works for, as well as from life.

3. We have received it as a maxim, that "A man is to do nothing in order to justification:" Nothing can be more false. Whoever desires to find favour with God, should cease from evil, and learn to do well. So God himself teacheth by the prophet Isaiah. Whoever repents, should do works meet for repentance: And if this is not in order to find favour, what does he do them for?

Once more review the whole affair.

1. Who of us is *now* accepted of God?

He that *now* believes in Christ with a loving, obedient heart.

2. But

2. But who among those that never heard of Christ? He that according to the light he has, feareth God and worketh righteousness.

3. Is this the same with, He that is sincere? Nearly, if not quite.

4. Is not this salvation by works? Not by the merit of works, but by works as a condition.

5. The grand objection to one of the preceding propositions, is drawn from matter of fact. God does in fact justify those who by their own confession neither feared God, nor wrought righteousness. Is this any exception to the general rule?

It is a doubt whether God makes any exception at all. But how are we sure that the person in question never did fear God, and work righteousness?

His own thinking so, is no proof. For we know how all that are convinced of sin, undervalue themselves in every respect.

6. Does not talking without proper caution of a justified or sanctified state, tend to mislead men? Almost naturally leading them to trust in what was done in one moment? Whereas we are every moment pleasing or displeasing God, according to our works; according to the whole of our present inward tempers, and outward behaviour.

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## SECTION XVII.

*How to provide for the Circuits in the Time of Conference, and to preserve and increase the Work of God.*

*Quest.* **W**HAT can be done to supply the circuits during the sitting of the Conference?

*Ans.* 1. Let all the appointments stand according to the plan of the circuit. 2. Engage

2. Engage as many local Preachers and Exhorters as will supply them ; and let them be paid for their time in proportion to the salary of the Travelling-Preachers.

3. If Preachers and Exhorters cannot attend, let some person of ability be appointed in every society to sing, pray, and read one of Mr. Wesley's sermons.

4. And if that cannot be done, let there be prayer-meetings.

5. Wherever you can, in large societies, appoint prayer-meetings.

Lastly, let a fast be published at every quarterly meeting for the Friday following : and a memorandum of it be written on all the class-papers. Also be active in dispersing the books among the people.

## S E C T I O N XVIII.

*Of employing our Time profitably, when we are not travelling, or engaged in public Exercises.*

*Quest. 1.* **W**HAT general method of employing our time would you advise us to ?

*Answ.* We advise you, 1. As often as possible to rise at four. 2. From four to five in the morning, and from five to six in the evening, to meditate, pray, and read the scriptures, with notes, and the closely practical parts of what Mr. Wesley has published. 3. From six in the morning till twelve (allowing an hour for breakfast) read in order, with much prayer, the Christian Library, and other pious books.

*Quest. 2.* Why is it that the people under our care are not better ?

C. 2.

*Answ.*

*Ans.* Other reasons may concur; but the chief is, because we are not more knowing and more holy.

*Quest.* 3. But why are we not more knowing?

*Ans.* Because we are idle. We forget our first rule, "Be diligent. Never be unemployed. Never be triflingly employed: neither spend any more time at any place than is strictly necessary." I fear there is altogether a fault in this matter, and that few of us are clear. Which of you spends as many hours a day in God's work, as you did formerly in man's work? We talk, talk—or read what comes next to hand. We must, absolutely must cure this evil, or betray the cause of God. But how? 1. Read the most useful books, and that regularly and constantly. 2. Steadily spend all the morning in this employment, or at least five hours in four and twenty. "But I have no taste for reading." Contract a taste for it by use, or return to your former employment. "But I have no books." Be diligent to spread the books, and you will have the use of them.

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## SECTION XIX.

### *Of Baptism.*

**L**ET every adult person, and the parents of every child, to be baptized, have the choice either of immersion, sprinkling, or pouring.

*N. B.* We will on no account whatever receive a present for administering baptism, or the burial of the dead.

## SECTION XX.

*Of the Lord's Supper.*

*Quest.* **A**RE there any directions to be given concerning the administration of the Lord's Supper?

*Answ.* 1. Let those who choose, receive it kneeling, and those who do not, either standing or sitting.

2. Let no person that is not a member of our society, be admitted to the communion, without examination, and some token given by an Elder or Deacon.

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## SECTION XXI.

*Of unlawful Marriages.*

*Quest.* 1. **D**O we observe any evil which has lately prevailed among our societies?

*Answ.* Many of our members have married with *unawakened* persons. This has produced bad effects; they have been either hindered for life, or turned back to perdition.

*Quest.* 2. What can be done to put a stop to this?

*Answ.* 1. Let every Preacher publicly enforce the Apostle's caution, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers."

2. Let him openly declare, whoever does this will be expelled the society.

3. When any such is expelled, let a suitable exhortation be subjoined.

4. Let all be exhorted to take no step in so weighty a matter, without advising with the most serious of their brethren.

*Quest.* 3. Ought any woman to marry without the consent of her parents?

*Answ.*

## SECTION XXIV.

*Of the Privileges granted to serious Persons that are not of the Society.*

*Quest. 1.* **H**OW often shall we permit strangers to be present at the meeting of the society?

*Ans. w.* At every other meeting of the society in every place, let no stranger be admitted. At other times they may; but the same persons not above twice or thrice.

*Quest. 2.* How often shall we permit strangers to be present at our love-feasts?

*Ans. w.* Let them be admitted with the utmost caution; and the same person on no account above twice or thrice, unless he becomes a member.

## SECTION XXV.

*Of visiting from House to House; guarding against those Sins that are so common to Professors, and enforcing Practical Religion.*

*Quest. 1.* **H**OW can we further assist those under our care?

*Ans. w. 1.* By instructing them at their own houses. What unspeakable need is there of this! The world says, "*The Methodists are no better than other people.*" This is not true in the general. But, 1. Personal religion, either toward God or man, is too superficial amongst us. We can but just touch on a few particulars. How little faith is there among us? How little communion with God? How little living in Heaven, walking in eternity, deadness to every creature? How much love of the world? Desire of pleasure, of ease, of getting money?

money? How little brotherly love? What continual judging one another? What gossiping, evil speaking, tale-bearing? What want of moral honesty? To instance only one particular; who does as he would be done by, in buying and selling?

2. Family religion is wanting in many branches. And what avails public preaching alone, though we could preach like angels? We must, yea, every travelling-preacher must instruct the people from house to house. Till this is done, and that in good earnest, the Methodists will be no better.

Our religion is not deep, universal, uniform; but superficial, partial, uneven. It will be so till we spend half as much time in this visiting, as we now do in talking uselessly. Can we find a better method of doing this than Mr. Baxter's? If not, let us adopt it without delay. His whole tract, intitled, *Gileas Salvianus*, is well worth a careful perusal. Speaking of this visiting from house to house, he says (p. 351.)

“We shall find many hinderances, both in ourselves and the people.”

1. In ourselves, there is much dulness and laziness, so that there will be much ado to get us to be faithful in the work.

2. We have a base, man-pleasing temper, so that we let men perish, rather than lose their love: we let them go quietly to hell, lest we should offend them.

3. Some of us have also a foolish bashfulness. We know not how to begin, and blush to contradict the devil.

4. But the greatest hinderance is weakness of faith. Our whole motion is weak, because the spring of it is weak.

5. Lastly, we are unskilful in the work. How few know how to deal with men, so as to get within them, and suit all our discourse to their several conditions and tempers: To choose the fittest subjects, and follow them with a holy mixture of seriousness, terror, love, and meekness?

But

But undoubtedly this private application is implied in those solemn words of the apostle, *I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and dead at his appearing, preach the word; be instant in season, out of season: Reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long suffering.*

O brethren, if we could but set this work on foot in all our societies, and prosecute it zealously, what glory would redound to God. If the common lukewarmness were banished, and every shop and every house busied in speaking of the word and works of God; surely God would dwell in our habitations, and make us his delight.

And this is absolutely necessary to the welfare of our people, some of whom neither repent nor believe to this day. Look round, and see how many of them are still in apparent danger of damnation. And how can you walk, and talk, and be merry with such people, when you know their case? Methinks when you look them in the face, you should break forth into tears, as the prophet did when he looked upon Haze-el, and then set on them with the most vehement exhortations. O, for God's sake, and the sake of poor souls, bestir yourselves, and spare no pains that may conduce to their salvation!

What cause have we to bleed before the Lord this day, that we have so long neglected this good work! If we had but engaged in it sooner, how many more might have been brought to Christ? And how much holier and happier might we have made our societies before now? And why might we not have done it sooner? There are many hinderances: And so there always will be. But the greatest hinderance was in ourselves, in our littleness of faith and love.

But it is objected, I. This will take up so much time, we shall not have leisure to follow our studies.

We answer, 1. Gaining knowledge is a good thing, but saving souls is a better. 2. By this very thing you will gain the most excellent knowledge, that of God and eternity. 3. You will have time for gaining other knowledge

knowledge too. Only sleep not more than you need :  
 “ and never be idle, or triflingly employed.” But,  
 4. If you can do but one, let your studies alone. We  
 ought to throw by all the libraries in the world, rather  
 than be guilty of the loss of one soul.

It is objected, II. “ The people will not submit to  
 it.” If some will not, others will. And the success  
 with them, will repay all your labour. O let us herein  
 follow the example of St. Paul. 1. For our general  
 business, *Serving the Lord with all humility of mind :*  
 2. Our special work, *Take heed to yourselves, and to all  
 the flock :* 3. Our doctrine, *Repentance towards God, and  
 faith in our Lord Jesus Christ :* 4. The place, *I have  
 taught you publicly, and from house to house :* 5. The ob-  
 ject and manner of teaching, *I ceased not to warn every  
 one, night and day, with tears :* 6. His innocence and  
 self-denial herein, *I have coveted no man’s silver or gold :*  
 7. His patience, *Neither count I my life dear unto myself.*  
 And among all other motives, let these be ever before  
 our eyes : 1. *The church of God, which he hath purcha-  
 sed with his own blood.* 2. *Grievous wolves shall enter  
 in : yea, of yourselves shall men arise, speaking perverse  
 things.*

Write this upon your hearts, and it will do you  
 more good than twenty years’ study. Then you will  
 have no time to spare : You will have work enough.  
 Then likewise no Preacher will stay with us who is as  
 salt that has lost its flavour. For to such this employ-  
 ment would be mere drudgery. And in order to it,  
 you will have need of all the knowledge you can pro-  
 cure, and grace you can attain.

The sum is, Go into every house in course, and  
 teach every one therein, young and old, to be Chris-  
 tians inwardly and outwardly ; make every particular  
 plain to their understandings ; fix it in their minds ;  
 write it on their hearts. In order to this, there must  
 be line upon line, precept upon precept. What pa-  
 tience, what love, what knowledge is requisite for  
 this ? We must needs do this, were it only to avoid  
 idleness. Do we not loiter away many hours in every  
 D week ?

week? Each try himself: No idleness is consistent with growth in grace. Nay, without exactness in redeeming time, you cannot retain the grace you received in justification.

*Quest.* 2. Why are we not more holy, why do we not live in eternity? Walk with God all the day long? Why are we not all devoted to God? Breathing the whole spirit of missionaries?

*Ans.* Chiefly because we are enthusiasts; looking for the end without using the means. To touch only upon two or three instances: Who of you rises at four? Or even at five, when he does not preach? Do you know the obligation and benefit of fasting or abstinence? How often do you practise it? The neglect of this alone is sufficient to account for our feebleness and faintness of spirit. We are continually grieving the Holy Spirit of God by the habitual neglect of a plain duty. Let us amend from this hour.

*Quest.* 3. How shall we guard against sabbath-breaking, evil-speaking, unprofitable conversation, lightness, expensiveness or gaiety of apparel, and contracting debts without due care to discharge them?

*Ans.* 1. Let us preach expressly on each of these heads. 2. Read in every society the sermon on evil-speaking. 3. Let the leaders closely examine and exhort every person to put away the accursed thing. 4. Let the Preachers warn every society, that none who is guilty herein, can remain with us. 5. Extirpate buying or selling goods that have not paid the duty laid upon them by government, out of every society. Let none remain with us who will not totally abstain from this evil in every kind and degree. Extirpate bribery, receiving any thing directly or indirectly, for voting at any election. Shew no respect to persons herein, but expel all that touch the accursed thing.

*Quest.* 4. What shall we do to prevent scandal, when any of our members fail in business, or contract debts which they are not able to pay?

*Ans.* Let the Elder or Deacon desire two or three judicious members of the society to inspect the accounts

counts of the supposed delinquents; and if they have behaved dishonestly, or borrowed money without a probability of paying, let them be suspended until their credit is restored.

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## SECTION XXVI.

### *Of the Instruction of Children.*

*Quest.* **W**HAT shall we do for the rising generation? Let him who is zealous for God and the souls of men begin now.

*Answ.* 1. Where there are ten children whose parents are in society, meet them an hour once a week; but where this is impracticable, meet them once in two weeks.

2. Procure our instructions for them, and let all who can, read and commit them to memory.

3. Explain and impress them upon their hearts.

4. Talk with them every time you see any at home.

5. Pray in earnest for them. Diligently instruct and exhort all parents at their own houses.

6. Let the Elders, Deacons, and Preachers, take a list of the names of the children; and if any of them be truly awakened, let them be admitted into society.

7. Preach expressly on education; "But I have no gift for this." Pray earnestly for the gift, and use means to attain it.

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## SECTION XXVII.

*Of building Churches, and the Order to be observed therein.*

*Quest.* 1. **I**S any thing advisable in regard to building?

*Ans.* Let all our churches be built plain and decent; but not more expensively than is absolutely unavoidable: Otherwise the necessity of raising money will make rich men necessary to us. But if so, we must be dependent on them, yea, and governed by them. And then farewell to Methodist-discipline, if not doctrine too.

*N. B.* 1. That no person shall be eligible as a Trustee to any of our churches or colleges, nor act as a Steward or Leader, that is not in constant church-communion, and a regular leader or member of a class. 2. That no person that is a Trustee, shall be ejected while he is in joint security for money, unless such relief be given him as is demanded, or the person who makes the loan will accept.

*Quest.* 2. Is there any exception to the rule, "Let the men and women sit apart?"

*Ans.* There is no exception. Let them sit apart in all our churches.

*Quest.* 3. But is there not a worse indecency than this, talking in the congregation, before and after service? How shall this be cured?

*Ans.* Let all the Ministers and preachers join as one man, and enlarge on the impropriety of talking before or after service; and strongly exhort those that are concerned, to do it no more. In three months, if we are in earnest, this vile practice will be banished out of every Methodist congregation. Let none stop till he has carried his point.

## S E C T I O N XXVIII.

*Of raising a general Fund for the Propagation  
of the Gospel.*

*Quest.* **H**OW may we raise a general fund for carrying on the whole work of God?

*Ans.* By a yearly collection, and, if need be, a quarterly one, to be raised by every assistant in every principal congregation in his circuit. To this end, he may then read and enlarge upon the following hints in every such congregation.

“ How shall we send labourers into those parts where they are most of all wanted? Many are willing to hear, but not to bear the expence. Nor can it as yet be expected of them: Stay till the word of God has touched their hearts, and then they will gladly provide for them that preach it. Does it not lie upon us in the mean time to supply their lack of service? To raise a general fund, out of which, from time to time, that expence may be defrayed? By this means those who willingly offer themselves, may travel through every part, whether there are societies or not, and stay wherever there is a call, without being burdensome to any. Thus may the gospel, in the life and power thereof, be spread from sea to sea. Which of you will not rejoice to throw in your mite to promote this glorious work?

“ Besides this, in carrying on so large a work through the continent, there are calls for money in various ways, and we must frequently be at considerable expence, or the work must be at a full stop. Many too are the occasional distresses of our Preachers, or their families, which require an immediate supply.— Otherwise their hands would hang down, if they were not constrained to depart from the work.

“ The money contributed will be brought to the ensuing Conference.

“ Men and brethren, help ! Was there ever a call like this since you first heard the gospel-sound ? Help to relieve your companions in the kingdom of Jesus, who are prest above measure. Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. Help to send forth able, willing labourers into your Lord’s harvest : So shall ye be assistant in saving souls from death, and hiding a multitude of sins. Help to propagate the gospel of your salvation to the remotest corners of the earth, till the knowledge of our Lord shall cover the land as the waters cover the sea. So shall it appear to ourselves and all men, that we are indeed one body, united by one spirit ; so shall the baptized heathens be yet again constrained to say, “ See how these Christians love one another.”

## S E C T I O N XXIX.

*Of the Method of raising a Fund for the superannuated Preachers, and the Widows and Orphans of Preachers.*

*Quest. 1.* **H**OW can we provide for superannuated Preachers, and the widows and orphans of Preachers ?

*Ans. 1.* Let every Preacher contribute two dollars yearly at the Conference.

2. Let every one when first admitted as a Travelling-Preacher, pay twenty shillings Pennsylvania currency.

3. Let the money be lodged in the hands of the presiding Elder, or lent to the College ; and an account thereof kept by the Deacon.

*N. B.* The application of the money shall rest with the Conference.

4. Out of this fund, let provision be made, first, for the worn-out Preachers, and then for the widows and children of those that are dead.

5. Every

5. Every worn-out Preacher shall receive, if he wants it, not usually more than twenty-four pounds annually, Pennsylvania currency.

6. Every widow of a Preacher shall receive yearly, if she wants it, during her widowhood, twenty pounds.

7. Every child of a Preacher shall receive once for all, if he wants it, twenty pounds.

8. But none shall be entitled to any thing from this fund, till he has paid fifty shillings.

9. Nor any who neglects paying his subscription for three years together, unless he be sent by the Conference out of these United States.

10. Let every assistant, as far as possible, bring to the Conference the contribution of every Preacher left behind in his circuit.

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## S E C T I O N   X X X .

### *Of the plan of Education established in Cokebury College.*

THE College is built at *Abingdon* in *Maryland*, on a healthy spot, enjoying a fine air and very extensive prospect. It is to receive for education and board the sons of the Elders and Preachers of the Methodist Church, poor orphans, and the sons of the subscribers and of other friends. It will be expected that all our friends who send their children to the College will, if they be able, pay a moderate sum for their education and board; the rest will be taught and boarded, and, if our finances will allow of it, cloathed *gratis*. The institution is also intended for the benefit of our young men who are called to preach, that they may receive a measure of that improvement which is highly expedient as a preparative for public service. A teacher of the languages with an assistant, will be provided, as also an English master, to teach with the utmost propriety both

to

to read and speak in the English language : nor shall any other branch of literature be omitted, which may be thought necessary for any of the students. Above all, especial care shall be taken that due attention be paid to the religion and morals of the children, and to the exclusion of all such as continue of an ungovernable temper. The College will be under the presidentship of the Bishops of our church for the time being : and is to be supported by yearly collections throughout our circuits, and any endowments which our friends may think proper to give and bequeath.

Three objects of considerable magnitude, we have in view in the instituting of this College.

The first is a provision for the sons of our married Ministers and Preachers.

The wisdom and love of GOD hath now thrust out a large number of labourers into his harvest : Men who desire nothing on earth but to promote the glory of GOD, by saving their own souls and those that hear them. And those to whom they minister spiritual things, are willing to minister to them of their temporal things ; so that they *have food to eat, and raiment to put on*, and are content therewith.

A competent provision is likewise made for the wives of married Preachers.

Yet one considerable difficulty lies on those that have boys, when they grow too big to be under their mother's direction. Having no father to govern and instruct them, they are exposed to a thousand temptations. To remedy this, is one motive that induces us to lay before our friends the intent of the College, that these little ones may have all the instruction they are capable of, together with all things necessary for the body.

In this view, our College will become one of the noblest charities that can be conceived. How reasonable is the institution ? Is it fit that the children of those who leave wife and all that is dear, to save souls from death, should want what is needful either for soul or body ? Ought not we to supply what the parent cannot, because of his labours in the gospel ? How  
 excellent.

excellent will be the effect of this institution? The Preacher eased of this weight, can the more cheerfully go on in his labour. And perhaps many of these children may hereafter fill up the place of those that shall *rest from their labours*.

The second object we have in view, is the education and support of poor orphans; and surely we need not enumerate the many happy consequences arising from such a charity. Innumerable blessings concenter in it; not only the *immediate* relief of the objects of our charity, but the ability given them, under the providence of God, to provide for themselves through the remainder of their lives.

The last, though not perhaps the least object in view, is the establishment of a seminary for the children of our competent friends, where learning and religion may go hand in hand: Where every advantage may be obtained which may promote the prosperity of the present life, without endangering the morals and religion of the children, through those temptations to which they are too much exposed in most of the public schools. This is an object of importance indeed: And here all the tenderest feelings of the parent's heart range on our side.

But the expence of such an undertaking will be very large: And the best means we could think of at our late Conference to accomplish our design was, to desire the assistance of all those in every place, who wish well to the work of God: Who long to see sinners converted to God, and the kingdom of Christ set up in all the earth.

All who are thus minded, and more especially our own friends who form our congregations, have an opportunity now of shewing their love to the gospel. Now promote, as far as in you lies, one of the noblest charities in the world. Now forward, as you are able, one of the most excellent designs that ever was set on foot in this country. Do what you can to comfort the parents, who give up their all for you, and to give their children cause to bless you. You will be no poorer

poorer for what you do on such an occasion. God is a good pay-master. And you know, in doing this you *lend unto the LORD: in due time HE shall repay you.*

The students will be instructed in English, Latin, Greek, Logic, Rhetoric, History, Geography, Natural Philosophy and Astronomy. To these languages and sciences shall be added, when the finances of our College will admit of it, the Hebrew, French, and German languages.

But our first object shall be, To answer the design of *Christian* education, by forming the minds of the youth, through divine aid, to wisdom and holiness; instilling into their tender minds the principles of true religion, speculative, experimental, and practical, and training them in the ancient way, that they may be rational, scriptural Christians. For this purpose we shall expect and enjoin it, not only on the President and Tutors, but also upon our Elders, Deacons, and Preachers, to embrace every opportunity of instructing the students in the great branches of the Christian religion.

And this is one principal reason why we do not admit students *indiscriminately* into our College. For we are persuaded that the *promiscuous admission* of all sorts of youth into a seminary of learning, is pregnant with many bad consequences. For are the students likely (suppose they possessed it) to retain much religion in a College where all that offer are admitted, however corrupted already in principle as well as practice? And what wonder, when (as too frequently it happens) the parents themselves have no more religion than their offspring.

For the same reason we have consented to receive children of 7 years of age, as we wish to have the opportunity of "teaching their young ideas how to shoot," and gradually forming their minds through the divine blessing, almost from their infancy, to holiness and heavenly wisdom as well as human learning. And we may add, that we are thoroughly convinced with the great *Milton* (to whose admirable treatise on education

cation we refer you) that it is highly expedient for every youth to begin and finish his education at the same place: that nothing can be more irrational and absurd than to break this off in the middle, and to begin it again at a different place, and perhaps in a quite different manner. And on this account we earnestly desire that the parents and others who may be concerned, will maturely consider the last observation, and not send their children to our seminary, if they are not to complete their education there, or at least make some considerable proficiency in the Languages, and in the Arts and Sciences.

It is also our particular desire, that all who shall be educated in our College, may be kept at the utmost distance as from vice in general, so in particular from softness and effeminacy of manners.

We shall therefore inflexibly insist on their rising early in the morning; and we are convinced by constant observation and experience, that this is of vast importance both to body and mind. It is of admirable use either for preserving a good, or improving a bad constitution. It is of peculiar service in all nervous complaints, both in preventing and removing them. And by thus strengthening the various organs of the body, it enables the mind to put forth its utmost exertions.

On the same principle we prohibit *play* in the strongest terms: and in this we have the two greatest writers on the subject that perhaps any age has produced (Mr. *Locke* and Mr. *Rousseau*) of our sentiments: for though the latter was essentially mistaken in his religious system, yet his wisdom in other respects, and extensive genius, are indisputably acknowledged. The employments therefore which we have chosen for the recreation of the students, are such as are of the greatest public utility, *agriculture* and *architecture*; studies more especially necessary for a new-settled country: and of consequence the instructing of our youth in all the practical branches of those important arts, will be an effectual method of rendering them more useful to  
their

their country.—Agreeably to this idea, the greatest statesman that perhaps ever shone in the annals of history, *Peter*, the Russian emperor, who was deservedly styled *the Great*, disdained not to stoop to the employment of a *ship-carpenter*. Nor was it rare during the purest times of the Roman Republic, to see the conquerors of nations and deliverers of their country return with all simplicity and cheerfulness to the exercise of the plough. In conformity to this sentiment, one of the completest poetic pieces of antiquity (the *Georgics* of *Virgil*) is written on the subject of husbandry; by the perusal of which, and submission to the above regulations, the students delightfully unite the theory and the practice together. We say *delightfully*, for we do not entertain the most distant thought of turning these employments into drudgery or slavery, but into pleasing recreations for the mind and body.

In teaching the languages, care shall be taken to read those authors, and those only, who join together the purity, the strength, and the elegance of their several tongues. And the utmost caution shall be used, that nothing immodest be found in any of our books.

But this is not all. We shall take care that our books be not only inoffensive, but useful: That they contain as much strong *sense*, and as much *genuine morality* as possible: As far therefore as is consistent with the foregoing observations, a choice and universal library shall be provided for the use of the students.

Our annual subscription is intended for the support of the charitable part of the institution. We have in the former part of this address enlarged so fully on the nature and excellency of the charity, that no more need be said. The relieving our travelling Ministers and Preachers, by educating, boarding, and cloathing their sons, is a charity of the most noble and extensive kind, not only towards the immediate subjects of it, but also towards the public in general; enabling those “flames of fire,” who might otherwise be obliged to confine themselves to an exceedingly contracted sphere of action for the support of their families, to carry the  
favour

favour of the gospel to the remotest corners of these United States.

The four guineas a year for tuition, we are persuaded, cannot be lowered, if we give the students that finished education which we are determined they shall have. And though our principal object is to instruct them in the doctrines, spirit, and practice of Christianity; yet we trust that our College will in time send forth men that will be blessings to their country in every laudable office and employment of life, thereby uniting the two greatest ornaments of intelligent beings, which are too often separated, *deep learning* and *genuine religion*.

The rules and regulations with which you are here presented, have been weighed and digested in our Conference: But we also submit them to your judgment, as we shall be truly thankful for your advice, as well as your prayers for the success of the College, even where the circumstances of things will not render it expedient to you to favour us with your charity. And we shall esteem ourselves happy if we be favoured with any new light, whether from the members of our own church or of any other, whereby they may be abridged, enlarged, or in any other way improved, that the institution may be as near perfection as possible.

### *General RULES concerning the College.*

- 1st. **A** PRESIDENT and two Tutors shall be provided for the present.
- 2dly. The students shall consist of,
  1. The sons of Travelling-Preachers.
  2. The sons of annual subscribers, the children recommended by those annual subscribers who have none of their own, and the sons of members of our society.
  3. Orphans. But,
1. The sons of the annual subscribers shall have the preference to any others, except those of the Travelling-Preachers.

2. An annual subscriber, who has no sons of his own, shall have a right to recommend a child; and such child so recommended, shall have the preference to any other, except the sons of Travelling-Preachers and annual subscribers.
3. As many of the students as possible shall be lodged and boarded in the town of Abingdon, among our pious friends; but those who cannot be so lodged and boarded, shall be provided for in the College.
4. The price of education shall be four guineas.
5. The sons of the Travelling-Preachers shall be boarded, educated, and cloathed *gratis*, except those whose parents, according to the judgment of the Conference, are of ability to defray the expence.
6. The orphans shall be boarded, educated, and cloathed *gratis*.
7. No Travelling-Preacher shall have the liberty of keeping his son on the foundation any longer than he travels, unless he be superannuated, or disabled by want of health.
8. No Travelling-Preacher, till he has been received into full connection, shall have a right to place his son on the foundation of this institution.
9. No student shall be received into the College under the age of seven years.

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## RULES *for the Economy of the College and* Students.

1. **T**HE Students shall rise at five o'clock in the morning, summer and winter, at the ringing of the College-bell.
2. All the students, whether they lodge in or out of the College, shall assemble together in the College at six o'clock, for public prayer, except in cases of sickness; and on any omission shall be responsible to the President.

3. From

3. From morning-prayer till seven, they shall be allowed to recreate themselves as is hereafter directed.
4. At seven they shall breakfast.
5. From eight till twelve, they are to be closely kept to their respective studies.
6. From twelve to three, they are to employ themselves in recreation and dining :—Dinner to be ready at one o'clock.
- ✓ 7. From three till six, they are again to be kept closely to their studies.
8. At six they shall sup.
9. At seven there shall be public prayer.
10. From evening-prayer till bed-time, they shall be allowed recreation.
11. They shall all be in bed at nine o'clock, without fail.
12. Their recreations shall be gardening, walking, riding, and bathing, without doors ; and the carpenter's, joiner's, cabinet-maker's, or turner's business, within doors.
13. A large plot of land, of at least three acres, shall be appropriated for a garden, and a person skilled in gardening be appointed to overlook the students when employed in that recreation.
14. A convenient bath shall be made for bathing.
15. A master, or some proper person by him appointed, shall be always present at the time of bathing. Only one shall bathe at a time ; and no one shall remain in the water above a minute.
16. No student shall be allowed to bathe in the river.
17. A *Taberna Lignaria* shall be provided on the premises, with all proper instruments and materials, and a skilful person be employed to overlook the students at this recreation.
18. The students shall be indulged with nothing which the world calls *play*. Let this rule be observed with the strictest nicety ; for those who play when they are young, will play when they are old.
19. Each student shall have a bed to himself, whether he boards in or out of the College.

20. The

20. The students shall lie on mattresses, not on featherbeds, because we believe the mattresses to be more healthy.
21. The President and Tutors shall strictly examine from time to time, whether our friends who board the students, comply with these rules as far as they concern them.
22. A skilful physician shall be engaged to attend the students on every emergency, that the parents may be fully assured that proper care shall be taken of the health of their children.
23. The Bishops shall examine by themselves or their delegates, into the progress of all the students in learning, every half year, or oftener, if possible.
24. The Elders, Deacons, and Preachers, as often as they visit Abingdon, shall examine the students concerning their knowledge of God and religion.
25. The students shall be divided into proper classes for that purpose.
26. A pupil who has a total incapacity to attain learning, shall, after sufficient trial, be returned to his parents.
27. If a student be convicted of any open sin, he shall, for the first offence, be reproved in private; for the second offence, he shall be reproved in public; and for the third offence, he shall be punished at the discretion of the President: if incorrigible, he shall be expelled.
28. But if the sin be exceedingly gross, and a Bishop see it necessary, he may be expelled for the first, second, or third offence.
29. Idleness, or any other fault, may be punished with confinement, according to the discretion of the President.
30. A convenient room shall be set apart as a place of confinement.
31. The President shall be the judge of all crimes and punishments, in the absence of the Bishops.
32. But the President shall have no power to expel a student without the advice and consent of three of the Trustees: but a Bishop shall have that power.

## S E C T I O N XXXI.

*Of the Printing of Books, and the Application of the Profits arising therefrom.*

**A**S it has been frequently recommended by the Preachers and people, that such books as are wanted, be printed in this country—we therefore propose,

1. That the advice of the Conference shall be desired concerning any valuable impression, and their consent be obtained, before any steps be taken for the printing thereof.

2. That the profits of the books, after all the necessary expences are defrayed, shall be applied, as the Bishop and Council shall direct.

## S E C T I O N XXXII.

*Of bringing to Trial, finding guilty, reprov-  
ing, suspending, and excluding disorderly Per-  
sons from Society and Church Privileges.*

*Quest.* **H**OW shall a suspected member be brought to trial?

*Ans.* Before the society of which he is a member, or a select number of them, in the presence of a Bishop, Elder, Deacon, or Preacher, in the following manner. Let the accused and accuser be brought face to face: if this cannot be done, let the next best evidence be procured. If the accused person be found guilty, and the crime be such as is expressly forbidden by the word of God, sufficient to exclude a person from the kingdom of grace and glory, and to make him a subject of

wrath and hell, let him be expelled. If he evade a trial by absenting himself after sufficient notice given him, and the circumstances of the accusation be strong and presumptive, let him be esteemed as guilty, and accordingly excluded. And without evident marks and fruits of repentance, such offenders shall be solemnly disowned before the church. Witnesses from without shall not be rejected, if a majority believe them to be honest men.

But in cases of neglect of duties of any kind, imprudent conduct, indulging sinful tempers or words, disobedience to the order and discipline of the church, —First, let private reproof be given by a Leader or Preacher; if there be an acknowledgment of the fault and proper humiliation, the person may remain on trial. On a second offence, a Preacher may take one or two faithful friends. On a third failure, if the transgression be increased or continued, let it be brought before the society or a select number; if there be no sign of humiliation and the church is dishonoured, the offender must be cut off. If there be a murmur or complaint that justice is not done, the person shall be allowed an appeal to the quarterly meeting, and have his case reconsidered before a Bishop, presiding Elder, or Deacon, with the Preachers, Stewards, and Leaders who may be present. After such forms of trial and expulsion, such persons as are thus excommunicated shall have no privileges of society and sacrament in our church, without contrition, confession, and proper trial.

*N. B.* From this time forward, no person shall be owned as a member of our church, without six months trial.

EMORY L. V.  
( 51 ) 4-4  
LIBRARY AND READING  
SECTION XXXIII  
MAY 1907

Of the Manner in which immoral Ministers  
and Preachers shall be brought to Trial,  
found guilty, reprov'd, and suspended in the  
Intervals of Conference.

*Quest. 1.* **W**HAT shall be done when an Elder, Deacon, or Preacher, is under the report of being guilty of some capital crime, expressly forbidden in the word of God as an unchristian practice, sufficient to exclude a person from the kingdom of grace and glory, and to make him a subject of wrath and hell?

*Ans.* Let the presiding Elder call as many Ministers to the trial as he shall think fit, at least three, and if possible bring the accused and accuser face to face; if the person is clearly convicted, he shall be suspended from official services in the church, and not be allowed the privileges of a member. But if the accused be a *presiding* Elder, the Preachers must call in the *presiding* Elder of the neighbouring district, who is required to attend and act as judge.

If the persons cannot be brought face to face, but the supposed delinquent flees from trial, it shall be received as a presumptive proof of guilt; and out of the mouth of two or three witnesses he shall be condemned. Nevertheless, he may then demand a trial face to face, or he may appeal to the next Conference in that district.

*Quest. 2.* What shall be done in cases of improper tempers, words, or actions, or a breach of the articles and discipline of the church?

*Ans.* The person so offending shall be reprehended by his Bishop, Elder, Deacon, or Preacher that has the charge of the circuit; or if he be a Bishop, he shall be reprehended

reprehended by the Conference. Should a second transgression take place, one, two, or three Preachers may be called in; if not cured then, he shall be tried at the quarterly meeting by the Elders and Preachers presiding; if still incurable, he shall be brought before the Conference, and if found guilty and impenitent, he shall be expelled from the connection, and his name so returned in the minutes.

*N. B.* Any Preacher suspended at a quarterly meeting from preaching, shall not resume that employment again but by the order of the Conference. But it is to be observed, that a Preacher shall be tried by a Deacon, a Deacon by an Elder, an Elder by a presiding Elder, and a presiding Elder by the presiding Elder of a neighbouring district.

## SECTION XXXIV.

### *Of the Qualification and Duty of Stewards.*

*Quest. 1.* **W**HAT are the qualifications necessary for Stewards?

*Ans.* Let them be men of solid piety, that both know and love the Methodist doctrine and discipline; and of good natural and acquired abilities to transact the temporal business.

*Quest. 2.* What is the duty of Stewards?

*Ans.* To take an exact account of all the money, or other provision made for and received by any travelling or local Preacher in the circuit; to make an accurate return of every expenditure of money, whether to the Preacher, the sick, or the poor; to seek the needy and distressed, in order to relieve and comfort them; to inform the Preachers of any sick or disorderly persons; to tell the Preachers what they think wrong.

\* For the trial of a Bishop, see the 4th quest. of the 3d sect.

wrong in them; to attend the quarterly meetings of their circuit; to give advice, if asked, in planning the circuit; to attend committees for the application of money to churches; to give counsel in matters of arbitration; to provide elements for the Lord's Supper; to write circular letters to the societies in the circuit to be more liberal, if need be; as also to let them know the state of the temporalities at the last quarterly meeting; to register the marriages and baptisms, and to be subject to the Bishops, the presiding Elder of their district, and the Elder, Deacon, and Travelling-Preachers of their circuit.

*Quest.* 3. What number of Stewards is necessary in each circuit?

*Ans.* Not less than two, nor more than four.

## S E C T I O N XXXV.

### *The Nature, Design, and general Rules of the United Societies.*

1. **O**UR society is nothing more than “*a company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation.*”

2. That it may the more easily be discerned, whether they are indeed working out their own salvation, each society is divided into smaller companies, called classes, according to their respective places of abode. There are about twelve persons in every class; one of whom is stiled *The Leader*.—It is his duty,

1. To see each person in his class once a week at least, in order,

1. To enquire how their souls prosper;

2. To

2. To advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion may require ;

3. To receive what they are willing to give, towards the relief of the Preachers, Church, and Poor.\*

II. To meet the Minister and the Stewards of the society once a week ; in order,

1. To inform the Minister of any that are sick, or of any that walk disorderly, or will not be reproved.

2. To pay to the stewards what they have received of their several classes in the week preceding.

3. There is one only condition previously required of those who desire admission into these societies, *a desire to flee from the wrath to come, i. e. a desire to be saved from their sins* : But wherever this is really fixed in the soul, it will be shewn by its fruits. It is therefore expected of all who continue therein, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

First, By doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind ; especially that which is most generally practised : Such as

The taking the name of God in vain :

The profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work thereon, or by buying or selling :

Drunkenness : or drinking spirituous liquors, unless in cases of necessity :

*The buying or selling the bodies and souls of men, women, or children, with an intention to enslave them :*

*Fighting, quarrelling, brawling ; brother going to law with brother ; returning evil for evil ; or railing for railing : the using many words in buying or selling :*

*The buying or selling goods that have not paid the duty :*

*The giving or taking things on usury, i. e. unlawful interest :*

*Uncharitable or unprofitable conversation : particularly speaking evil of Magistrates or of Ministers :*

Doing to others as we would not they should do unto us :

Doing

\* This part refers wholly to towns and cities, where the poor are generally numerous, and church-expences considerable.

Doing what we know is not for the glory of God :  
As

The *putting on of gold and costly apparel* :

The *taking such diversions* as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus :

The *singing those songs, or reading those books*, which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God :

Softness and needless self-indulgence :

Laying up treasure upon earth :

Borrowing without a probability of paying ; or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them.

4. It is expected of all who continue in these societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

Secondly, By doing good, by being in every kind merciful after their power, as they have opportunity, doing good of every possible sort, and, as far as is possible, to all men :

To their bodies, of the ability which God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by cloathing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick or in prison.

To their souls, by instructing, reproofing, or exhorting all we have any intercourse with ; trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine, that " we are not to do good, unless *our hearts be free to it.*"

By doing good, especially to them that are of the household of faith, or groaning so to be ; employing them preferably to others, buying one of another (unless you can be better served elsewhere) helping each other in business : and so much the more, because the world will love its own, and them *only*.

By all possible *diligence* and *frugality*, that the gospel be not blamed.

By running with patience the race that is set before them, *denying themselves, and taking up their cross daily* ; submitting to bear the reproach of Christ, to be as the filth and off-scouring of the world ; and looking that men should *say all manner of evil of them falsely for the Lord's sake.*

5. It is expected of all who desire to continue in these societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

Thirdly, By attending upon all the ordinances of God: Such are

The public worship of God;

The ministry of the word, either read or expounded;

The supper of the Lord;

Family and private prayer;

Searching the scriptures; and

Fasting or abstinence.

6. These are the general rules of our societies; all which we are taught of God to observe, even in his written word, which is the only rule, and the sufficient rule both of our faith and practice. And all these we know his Spirit writes on every truly awakened heart. If there be any among us who observe them not, who habitually break any of them, let it be known unto them who watch over that soul, as they that must give an account. We will admonish him of the error of his ways. We will bear with him for a season.—But then, if he repent not, he hath no more place among us. We have delivered our own souls.

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## SECTION XXXVI.

### ARTICLES of RELIGION.

#### I. *Of Faith in the Holy Trinity.*

**T**HERE is but one living and true God, everlasting, without body or parts; of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness; the maker and preserver of all things both visible and invisible. And in unity of this Godhead there are three persons of one substance, power, and eternity; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

II. *Of*

## II. *Of the Word, or Son of God, who was made very Man.*

**T**HE Son, who is the Word of the Father, the very and eternal God, of one substance with the Father, took man's nature in the womb of the blessed Virgin; so that two whole and perfect natures, that is to say, the Godhead and manhood, were joined together in one person, never to be divided, whereof is one Christ, very God, and very man, who truly suffered, was crucified, dead and buried, to reconcile his Father to us, and to be a sacrifice, not only for original guilt, but also for actual sins of men.

## III. *Of the Resurrection of Christ.*

**C**HRIST did truly rise again from the dead, and took again his body, with all things appertaining to the perfection of man's nature, wherewith he ascended into Heaven, and there sitteth until he return to judge all men at the last day.

## IV. *Of the Holy Ghost.*

**T**HE Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is of one substance, majesty, and glory, with the Father and the Son, very and eternal God.

## V. *The Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation.*

**H**OLY Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation: so that whatsoever is not read therein, or may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation. In the  
F name

name of the Holy Scripture, we do understand those Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, of whose authority was never any doubt in the church.

*The names of the Canonical Books.*

**G**ENESIS,

Exodus,

Leviticus,

Numbers,

Deuteronomy,

Joshua,

Judges,

Ruth,

The First Book of Samuel,

The Second Book of Samuel,

The First Book of Kings,

The Second Book of Kings,

The First Book of Chronicles,

The Second Book of Chronicles,

The Book of Ezra,

The Book of Nehemiah,

The Book of Esther,

The Book of Job,

The Psalms,

The Proverbs,

Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher,

Cantica, or Songs of Solomon,

Four Prophets the greater,

Twelve Prophets the less.

All the Books of the New Testament, as they are commonly received, we do receive and account canonical.

*VI. Of the Old Testament.*

**T**HE Old Testament is not contrary to the New ; for both in the Old and New Testament, everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man, being both God and

and man. Wherefore they are not to be heard, who feign that the old Fathers did look only for transitory promises. Although the law given from God by Moses, as touching ceremonies and rights, doth not bind Christians, nor ought the civil precepts thereof of necessity to be received in any commonwealth: yet, notwithstanding, no Christian whatsoever is free from the obedience of the commandments, which are called moral.

## VII. *Of Original or Birth Sin.*

**O**RIGINAL sin standeth not in the following of Adam (as the Pelagians do vainly talk) but it is the corruption of the nature of every man, that naturally is engendered of the offspring of Adam, whereby man is very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually.

## VIII. *Of Free-Will.*

**T**HE condition of man after the fall of Adam is such, that he cannot turn and prepare himself by his own natural strength and works to faith, and calling upon God: Wherefore we have no power to do good works pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will, and working with us, when we have that good will.

## IX. *Of the Justification of Man.*

**W**E are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, and not for our own works or deservings:—Wherefore, that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort.

## X. *Of*

## X. *Of Good Works.*

**A**LTHOUGH good works, which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and spring out of a true and lively faith, inso-much that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known, as a tree discerned by its fruit.

## XI. *Of Works of Supererogation.*

**V**OLUNTARY works, besides over and above God's commandments, which they call works of supererogation, cannot be taught without arrogancy and impiety. For by them men do declare, That they do not only render unto God as much as they are bound to do, but that they do more for his sake than of bounden duty is required: Whereas Christ saith plainly, When ye have done all that is commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants.

## XII. *Of Sin after Justification.*

**N**OT every sin willingly committed after justification, is the sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable. Wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin after justification: After we have received the Holy Ghost, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin, and, by the grace of God, rise again, and amend our lives. And therefore they are to be condemned, who say they can no more sin as long as they live here, or deny the place of forgiveness to such as truly repent.

## XIII. *Of the Church.*

**T**HE visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached,

preached, and the sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.

#### XIV. *Of Purgatory.*

**T**HE Romish doctrine concerning purgatory, pardon, worshipping, and adoration, as well of images as of reliques, and also invocation of saints, is a thing vainly invented, and grounded upon no warrant of scripture, but repugnant to the word of God.

#### XV. *Of speaking in the Congregation in such a Tongue as the People understand.*

**I**T is a thing plainly repugnant to the word of God, and the custom of the primitive church, to have public prayer in the church, or to minister the sacraments, in a tongue not understood by the people.

#### XVI. *Of the Sacraments.*

**S**ACRAMENTS ordained of Christ, are not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession; but rather they are certain signs of grace, and God's good will towards us, by the which he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him.

There are two Sacraments ordained of Christ our Lord, in the gospel; that is to say, Baptism and the Supper of the Lord.

Those five commonly called Sacraments; that is to say, Confirmation, Penance, Orders, Matrimony, and extreme Unction, are not to be counted for Sacraments of the Gospel, being such as have partly grown out of the *corrupt* following of the Apostles; and partly are states of life allowed in the Scriptures, but yet have not the like nature of Baptism and the Lord's Supper,

because they have not any visible sign or ceremony ordained of God.

The Sacraments were not ordained of Christ to be gazed upon, or to be carried about; but that we should duly use them. And in such only as worthily receive the same, they have a wholesome effect or operation: but they that receive them unworthily, purchase to themselves condemnation, as St. Paul saith.

## XVII. *Of Baptism.*

**B**APTISM is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized; but it is also a sign of regeneration, or the new birth. The baptism of young children is to be retained in the church.

## XVIII. *Of the Lord's Supper.*

**T**HE Supper of the Lord is not only a sign of the love that Christians ought to have among themselves one to another, but rather is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death: insomuch, that to such as rightly, worthily, and with faith receive the same, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ.

Transubstantiation, or the change of the substance of bread and wine in the Supper of the Lord, cannot be proved by Holy Writ; but is repugnant to the plain words of Scripture, overthroweth the nature of a sacrament, and hath given occasion to many superstitions.

The body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the Supper, only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper, is faith.

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The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper was not by Christ's ordinance reserved, carried about, lifted up, or worshipped.

### XIX. *Of both Kinds.*

**T**HE cup of the Lord is not to be denied to the lay-people; for both the parts of the Lord's Supper, by Christ's ordinance and commandment, ought to be administered to all Christians alike.

### XX. *Of the one Oblation of Christ, finished upon the Cross.*

**T**HE offering of Christ once made, is that perfect redemption, propitiation, and satisfaction for all the sins of the whole world, both original and actual; and there is none other satisfaction for sin but that alone. Wherefore the sacrifice of masses, in the which it is commonly said that the priest doth offer Christ for the quick and the dead, to have remission of pain or guilt, is a blasphemous fable, and dangerous deceit.

### XXI. *Of the Marriage of Ministers.*

**T**HE ministers of Christ are not commanded by God's law either to vow the estate of single life, or to abstain from marriage; therefore it is lawful for them, as for all other Christians, to marry at their own discretion, as they shall judge the same to serve best to godliness.

### XXII. *Of the Rites and Ceremonies of Churches.*

**I**T is not necessary that rites and ceremonies should in all places be the same, or exactly alike, for they have

have been always different, and may be changed according to the diversity of countries, times, and men's manners, so that nothing be ordained against God's word.—Whosoever, through his private judgment, willingly and purposely doth openly break the rites and ceremonies of the church to which he belongs, which are not repugnant to the word of God, and are ordained and approved by common authority, ought to be rebuked openly, that others may fear to do the like, as one that offendeth against the common order of the church, and woundeth the consciences of weak brethren.

Every particular church may ordain, change, or abolish rites and ceremonies, so that all things may be done to edification.

### XXIII. *Of the Rulers of the United States of America.*

THE President, the Congress, the General Assemblies, the Governors, and the Councils of State, *as the Delegates of the People*, are the Rulers of the United States of America, according to the division of power made to them by the general Act of Confederation, and by the Constitutions of their respective States. And the said States ought not to be subject to any foreign jurisdiction.

### XXIV. *Of Christian Men's Goods.*

THE riches and goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right, title, and possession of the same, as some do falsely boast. Notwithstanding, every man ought, of such things as he possesseth, liberally to give alms to the poor according to his ability.

XXV. *Of a Christian Man's Oath.*

**A**S we confess that vain and rash swearing is forbidden Christian men by our Lord Jesus Christ, and James his apostle ; so we judge that the Christian religion doth not prohibit, but that a man may swear when the magistrate requireth, in a cause of faith and charity, so it be done according to the Prophet's teaching, in justice, judgment, and truth.

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## SECTION XXXVII.

*Scripture Doctrine of Predestination, Election, and Reprobation.*

1. **T**HE scripture saith,\* God hath chosen us in Christ, before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love. And St. Peter calls the saints, † elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience. And St. Paul saith unto them, ‡ God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth ; whereunto he hath called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2. From all these places of scripture it is plain, that God hath chosen some to life and glory before or from the foundation of the world. And the wisdom of all Christians is, to labour that their judgments may be informed herein, according to the scripture. And to that end, let us consider the manner of God's speaking to the sons of men.

3. God

\* Ephes. i. 4. † 1 Pet. i. 2. ‡ 2 Thess. ii. 13, 14.

3. God saith to *Abraham*, Rom. iv. 17. *As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations, before him whom he believed, even God who quickeneth the dead, and calleth things that are not as though they were.* Observe, God speaks then, at that present time, to *Abraham*, saying, *I have made thee a father of many nations*, notwithstanding *Abraham* was not at that time the father of one child, but *Ismael*. How then must we understand, *I have made thee a father of many nations?*

4. The apostle tells us plainly, it was so, *Before God, who calleth things that are not as though they were.* And so he calleth *Abraham*, the father of many nations, though he was not as yet the father even of *Isaac*, in whom his seed was to be called.

5. God useth the same manner of speaking when he calleth *Christ*,\* *The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*; although indeed he was not slain for some thousand years after. Hence therefore we may easily understand what he speaketh of *electing us from the foundation of the world.*

6. God calleth *Abraham*, a father of many nations, though not so at that time. He calleth *Christ*, *The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, though not slain till he was a man in the flesh. Even so he calleth men *Elected from the foundation of the world*, though not elected till they were men in the flesh. Yet it is all so before God, who, knowing all things from eternity, *calleth things that are not as though they were.*

7. By all which it is clear, that as *Christ* was called *The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, and yet not slain till some thousand years after, till the day of his death, so also men are called *elect from the foundation of the world*, and yet are not elected perhaps till some thousand years after, till the day of their conversion to God.

8. And indeed this is plain, without going farther, from those very words of *St. Peter*, *Elect, according to the*

*the fore-knowledge of God, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience. For,*

If the elect are chosen through sanctification of the Spirit, then they were not chosen before they were sanctified by the Spirit. But they were not sanctified by the Spirit before they had a being. It is plain then neither were they chosen from the foundation of the world. But God calleth *things that are not as though they were.*

9. This is also plain from those words of St. Paul, *God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth.* Now,

If the saints are chosen to salvation, through believing of the truth, and were called to believe that truth by the hearing of the gospel, then they were not chosen before they believed the truth, and before they heard the gospel, whereby they were called to believe. But they were chosen through belief of the truth, and called to believe it by the gospel. Therefore they were not chosen before they believed; much less before they had a being, any more than Christ was slain before he had a being. So plain is it, that they were not elected, till they believed; although God calleth *things that are not as though they were.*

10. Again, how plain is it, where St. Paul saith, that they whom \* *God did predestinate, according to the council of his own will, to be to the praise of his own glory,* were such as did *first trust in Christ?* And in the very next verse he saith, that they *trusted in Christ after they heard the word of truth,* not before. But they did not hear the word before they were born. Therefore it is plain, the act of election is *in time,* though known of God before; who, according to his knowledge, often speaketh of the things *which are not as though they were.* And thus is the great stumbling-block about election taken away, that men may *make their calling and election sure.*

11. The

\* Ephes. i. 11, 12.

11. The scripture tells us as plainly what predestination is; it is God's fore-appointing obedient believers to salvation, not without, but *according to his fore-knowledge* of all their works *from the foundation of the world*. And so likewise he predestinates or fore-appoints all disobedient unbelievers to damnation, not without, but *according to his fore-knowledge* of all their works, *from the foundation of the world*.

12. We may consider this a little farther. God, from the foundation of the world, fore-knew all men's believing or not believing. And according to this his fore-knowledge, he chose or elected all obedient believers, as such, to salvation, and refused or *reprobated* all disobedient unbelievers, as such, to damnation. Thus the scriptures teach us to consider *election* and *reprobation*, *according to the fore-knowledge of God from the foundation of the world*.

13. But here some may object, that I hold our faith and obedience to be the cause of God's electing us to glory.

I answer, I do hold, that faith in Christ producing obedience to him is *a cause without which* God elected none to glory; for we never read of God's electing to glory, any who lived and died a disobedient unbeliever. But I do not hold, that it is the cause *for which* he elects any: the contrary of this is easily shewn thus:

Suppose my obedience is a cause of my election to salvation, What is the cause of my obedience?

*Answer.* My love to Christ.

But what is the cause of my love to Christ?

*Answer.* My faith in Christ.

But what is the cause of my faith in Christ?

*Answer.* The preaching of the gospel of Christ.

But what is the cause of the preaching of the gospel to us?

*Answer.* Christ dying for us.

But what is the cause of Christ's dying for us?

*Answer.* God's great love of pity wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses and sins.

14. Thus

14. Thus all men may see that I do not hold God chose any man to life and salvation for any good which he had done, or for any which was in him, before he put it there. And this I shall now shew more at large from the oracles of God.

1. God's great love of pity wherewith he loved the sons of men, even while they were dead in trespasses and sins, was the cause of his sending his Son to die for them; as appears from the following scriptures: \* *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, to the end that all who believe in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. For † when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. And, God commendeth his love to us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.*

2. Christ's dying for our sins is the cause of the gospel's being preached to us, as appears from those scriptures, ‡ *Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations. || Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.*

3. The gospel's being preached to sinners is the cause of their believing, as appears from those scriptures, § *How shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

4. Men's believing is the cause of their justification, as appears from those scriptures, \*\* *By him all that believe are justified from all things. †† He is the justifier of all that believe in Jesus. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law. ‡‡ Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; but for us also to whom*

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\* John iii. 16.

† Rom. v. 6, &c.

‡ Matt. xxviii. 18.

|| Mark xvi. 15.

§ Rom. x. 15, &c.

\*\* Acts xiii. 39.

†† Rom. iii. 26, &c.

‡‡ Rom. iv. 3, 23, &c.

*it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and rose again for our justification.*

5. Our knowing ourselves justified by faith is the cause of our love to Christ, as appears from these scriptures, \* *Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* † *We love him because he first loved us.*

6. Our love to Christ is the cause of our obeying him, as appears from those scriptures, ‡ *If ye love me, keep my commandments. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me. And, If any man love me, he will keep my words.* § *For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments.*

7. Our obeying Christ is the cause of his giving us eternal life, as appears from those scriptures, \*\* *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven.* †† *Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.* And ‡‡ *Christ being made perfect through sufferings, he became the author of eternal salvation to all that obey him.*

15. This may be more briefly expressed thus:

1. God's love was the cause of his sending his Son to die for sinners.

2. Christ's dying for sinners, is the cause of the gospel's being preached.

3. The preaching of the gospel is the cause, or means, of our believing.

4. Our believing is the cause, or condition, of our justification.

5. The knowing ourselves justified through his blood, is the cause of our love to Christ.

6. Our love to Christ is the cause of our obedience to him.

7. Our

\* 1 John iv. 10.

† 1 John iv. 19.

‡ John xiv. 15, 21, &c.

§ 1 John v. 3.

\*\* Matt. vii. 21.

†† Rev. xxii. 14.

‡‡ Heb. v. 9.

7. Our obedience to Christ is the cause of his becoming the author of eternal salvation to us.

16. These following things therefore ought well to be considered by all that fear God.

1. There was a necessity of God's love in sending his Son to die for us, without which he had not come to die.

2. There was a necessity of Christ's love in dying for us, without which the gospel could not have been preached.

3. There was a necessity of the gospel's being preached, without which there could have been no believing.

4. There is a necessity of our believing the gospel, without which we cannot be justified.

5. There is a necessity of our being justified by faith in the blood of Christ, without which we cannot come to know that he *loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.*

6. There is a necessity of our knowing his love, who first loved us, without which we cannot love him again.

7. There is a necessity of our loving him, without which we cannot keep his commandments.

8. There is a necessity of our keeping his commandments, without which we cannot enter into eternal life.

By all which we see, that there is as great a necessity of our keeping the commandments of God, as there was of God's sending his Son into the world, or of Christ's dying for our sins.

17. But for whose sins did Christ die? Did he die for *all* men, or but for *some*?

To this also I shall answer by the scriptures, shewing,

1. The testimony of all the prophets. 2. Of the angel of God. 3. Of Christ himself. And, 4. Of his apostles,

*First, the prophet Isaiah saith thus, \* Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet did we esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep, have gone*

gone astray : we have turned every one to his own way ; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all. Thus Isaiah sheweth plainly, that the iniquities of all those who went astray, were laid upon Christ. And to him the testimony of all the other prophets agreeth : \* *To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.*—The same faith that great prophet, John the Baptist, who † came to bear witness of the light, that all men through it might believe. And again, ‡ *Behold, saith he, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.* Thus have all the prophets, with one consent, testified that God laid upon Christ the iniquities of all that were gone astray : that he is the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world ; that all men through him may believe : and that through his name whosoever believeth in him, shall receive remission of sins.

Secondly, The angel of God testified the same thing, saying, § *Fear not ; for I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people, which was, that there was born unto them a Saviour, even Christ the Lord.* By this also it appears, that Christ died for all men. For else it could not have been glad tidings of great joy to all people ; but rather sad tidings to all those for whom he died not.

Thirdly, We come now to the words of Christ himself, who knew his own business better than any man else ; and therefore if his testimony agree with these, we must needs be convinced that they are true. Now he speaks thus : || *As Moses lifted up the serpent in the Wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.* Thus we see the words of Christ agree with

\* Acts x. 43.

† John i. 7.

‡ Ibid. verse 29.

§ Luke ii. 10.

|| John iii. 14, &c.

with the words of the prophets ; therefore it must needs be owned that Christ died for all.

*Fourthly*, And now we will hear what the apostles say concerning this thing. \* *The love of Christ*, saith the Apostle Paul, *constraineth us, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead ; and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him that died for them, and rose again.* And to Timothy he saith, † *There is one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.* Again, he saith to Titus, ‡ *The grace of God, which bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared.* And yet again to the Hebrews, § *That he, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man.* And to this agreeth St. John, witnessing, || *He is the propitiation for our sins ; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.* And again, speaking of himself and the rest of the apostles, he saith, \*\* *We have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son to be Saviour of the world.* Thus we have the testimony of all the prophets, of the angel of God, of Christ himself, and of his holy apostles, all agreeing together in one to prove, that Christ died for all mankind.

18. What then can they, who deny this, say ? Why, they commonly say, *All men*, in these scriptures, does not mean *all men*, but only *the elect* ; that *every man* here does not mean *every man*, but only every one of the elect ; that *the world* does not mean *the whole world*, but only the world of believers ; and that the *whole world*, in St. John's words, does not mean *the whole world*, but only the whole world of the elect.

19. To this shameless, senseless evasion, I answer thus :

If the scripture no where speaks of a world of believers or elect, then we have no ground, reason, pretence, or excuse for saying, Christ died only for a world of believers.

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\* 2 Cor. v. 14, &c.

† 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.

‡ Tit. ii. 11.

§ Heb. ii. 9.

|| 1 John ii. 2.

\*\* 1 John iv. 14.

believers or elect. But the scripture no where speaks of such a world. Therefore we have no ground or pretence for speaking thus.

Nay, the scripture is so far from calling believers or elected persons, *the world*, that they are every where in scripture plainly and expressly distinguished from *the world*. \* *If ye were of the world, saith Christ, the world would love its own; but because I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.*

20. But let the scripture itself speak, what world Christ died for. † *When we were yet without strength, Christ died for the ungodly. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.* From all which we may clearly see, that Christ died for the world of the ungodly, for the world of sinners, for the world of his enemies, the just one for the world of the unjust. But the elect, as elect, are not unjust. Therefore he died not for the elect, as elect; but even for that world St. John speaks of, when he says, "The whole world lieth in wickedness."

21. If it be said, "The elect were sinners once as well as others;" I answer, true; but not as they are elect in Christ, but as they were out of Christ, without hope and without God in the world. Therefore to say that Christ died for the elect, as elect, is absolute nonsense and confusion.

22. To put this matter out of doubt, I would commend these following considerations to all sober-minded men.

1. The scripture saith, "Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost."

But the elect, as elect, were not lost.

Therefore Christ died not for the elect, as or because they were elect; for that had been to seek and save what was found and saved before.

2. The scripture saith, Christ died for the unjust.

But the elect, as such, are not unjust.

Therefore,

Therefore, Christ died not for the elect, as elect; for that had been to justify them who were just before.

3. The scripture saith, "He came to preach deliverance to the captives."

But the elect, as elect, are not captives; for Christ hath set them free.

Therefore he died not for the elect, as elect; for that had been to set them at liberty who were at liberty before.

4. The scripture saith, "He quickened them who were dead in trespasses and sins, such as were without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise, without hope and without God in the world."

But the elect, as such, are not dead in trespasses and sins, but alive unto God. Neither are they without Christ, for they are chosen in him; nor are they aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of promise. But they are fellow citizens with the saints, and the household of God.

Therefore Christ died not for the elect, as or because they were elect. For that had been to quicken them that were alive before, and to bring them into covenant, who were in covenant before. And thus, by these men's account our Lord lost his labour of love, and accomplished A SOLEMN NOTHING.

23. Thus having shewn the grievous folly of those who say, that Christ died for none but the elect, I shall now prove by undeniable reasons, that he died for all mankind.

*Reason 1.* Because all the prophets, the angel of God, Christ himself, and his holy apostles with one consent, affirm it.

*Reason 2.* Because there is not one scripture, from the beginning of Genesis to the end of the Revelation, that denies it, either negatively, by saying, that he did not die for all; or affirmatively, by saying, that he died but for some.

*Reason 3.* Because he himself commanded, that the gospel should be preached to every creature.

*Reason*

more? If any therefore desire to have more, let him faithfully improve what he has. Likewise what man is he, who doth not know that he is not condemned for not doing what he could not do, but for leaving undone what he could have done if he would. Let any man deny it if he can.

27. "What then, may all men be saved if they will?"

Before I answer this question directly, I shall shew that those who ask it, are themselves compelled to grant as much freedom of will, as we desire to plead for.

For, 1. The Assembly of Divines, in their Confession of Faith, c. 9. do expressly say, "God hath endowed the will of man with that natural liberty that it is neither forced, nor by any absolute necessity determined to do good or evil." 2. Mr. Baxter, in the preface of his call to the unconverted, says, "That Calvin as well as Arminius, held free-will, and that no man of brains denieth, that man hath a will that is naturally free; it is free from violence, it is a self-determining principle." Sure here is as much said for free-will, as any man need to say, and perhaps more. For

The difference between us, is this. They say, "Man hath a will which is naturally free." We say, "Man hath this freedom of will, not naturally, but by grace."

We believe, that in the moment Adam fell, he had no freedom of will left; but that God, when of his own free grace he gave the promise of a Saviour to him and his posterity, graciously restored to mankind a liberty and power to accept of proffered salvation. And in all this, man's boasting is excluded; the whole of that which is good in him, even from the first moment of his will, being of grace and not of nature. And now we come directly to the question, Whether all men may be saved if they will?

28. To those who have considered what has been premised; I answer, 1. What should hinder them, if they be willing? For, 2. God is not willing that any should perish; yea, 3. He is willing that all men should be saved. And Christ is willing; for he "came not to judge the world, but to save the world." And how did he

he weep over Jerusalem? How often would he have gathered them together, even as an hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, but they would not. And now what hinders men's salvation, but that same, *they would not.*

29. They would not; they will not come at Christ's call, and hearken to his reproof, and wait for his counsels, and receive power from on high to live to him who died for them, walking in all his commandments and ordinances blameless, and following him whithersoever he goeth. This way is so narrow that few care to walk therein; and therefore they are not saved, even because *they reject the counsel of God against themselves.* They choose death; therefore they perish everlastingly.

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## SECTION XXXVIII.

# SERIOUS THOUGHTS

ON THE

*Infallible, unconditional Perseverance of all that have once experienced Faith in Christ.*

1. **M**ANY large volumes have already been published on this important subject. But the very length of them makes them hard to be understood, or even purchased by common readers. A short, plain treatise on this head, is what serious men have long desired, and what is here offered to those whom God has endowed with love and meekness of wisdom.

2. By the *Saints* I understand, those who are holy or righteous in the judgment of God himself: those who are endowed with the faith that purifies the heart, that produces a good conscience: those who are grafted into the good olive-tree, the spiritual, invisible church: those who

who are branches of the true vine, of whom Christ says, "I am the vine, ye are the branches:" those who so effectually know Christ, as by that knowledge to have escaped the pollutions of the world: those who see the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, and who have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, of the witness and the fruits of the Spirit: those who live by faith in the Son of God: those who are sanctified by the blood of the covenant; those to whom all, or any of these characters belong, I mean by the term *Saints*.

3. Can any of these fall away? By *falling away* we mean, not barely falling into sin. This, it is granted, they may. But can they fall *totally*? Can any of these so fall from God, as to perish everlastingly?

4. I am sensible, either side of this question is attended with great difficulties; such as reason alone could never remove. Therefore to the law and to the testimony. Let the living oracles decide: and if they speak for us, we neither seek nor want any further witness.

5. On this authority, I believe a saint may fall away: that one who is holy or righteous in the judgment of God himself, may nevertheless so fall from God as to perish everlastingly.

I. For thus saith the Lord: \* "When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, in his trespasses that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die."

That this is to be understood of eternal death, appears from the 26th verse:

"When a righteous man turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and dieth in them (here is temporal death) for this iniquity that he hath done, he shall die:" (here is death eternal.)

It appears further from the whole scope of the chapter, which is to prove, † "The soul that sinneth, it shall die."

If you say, "the soul here means the body," I answer, that will die whether you sin or no.

6. Again,

\* Ezek. xviii. 24.

† Verse 4.

6. Again, thus saith the Lord, † “ When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live, if he trust to his own righteousness (yea, or to that promise as absolute and unconditional) and committeth iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered, but for the iniquity that he hath committed shall he die.”

Again, || “ When the righteous turneth from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby.”

Therefore one who is holy and righteous in the judgment of God himself, may yet so fall as to perish everlastingly.

7. “ But how is this consistent with what God declareth elsewhere?” § “ If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments—I will visit their offences with the rod, and their sin with scourges. Nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my truth to fail. My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips: I have sworn once by my holiness that I will not fail David.”

I answer, there is no manner of inconsistency between one declaration and the other. The prophet declares the just judgment of God, against every righteous man who falls from his righteousness. The Psalmist declares,\* “ The old loving-kindnesses which God sware unto David in his truth. I have found, saith he, David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him. My hand shall hold him fast, and my arm shall strengthen him.—His seed also will I make to endure for ever, and his throne as the days of heaven.” It follows, † “ But if his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments—nevertheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my truth to fail. My covenant will I not break.

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† c. xxxiii. v. 13.

|| v. 18.

§ Psalm lxxxix. 31—34.

\* Psalm lxxxi. 20, 21, 29.

† Verse 31, &c.

14. " But do you not hereby make God changeable ?" Whereas \* " with him is no variableness, neither shadow of turning ?" By no means, God is unchangeably holy. Therefore he always " loveth righteousness, and hateth iniquity." He is unchangeably good. Therefore he pardoneth all that *repent and believe the gospel*. And he is unchangeably just ; therefore he *rewardeth every man according to his works*. But all this hinders not his resisting when they are proud, those to whom he gave grace when they were humble. Nay, his unchangeableness itself requires, that if they grow high-minded, God should cut them off : that there should be a proportionable change in all the divine dispensations toward them.

15. " But how then is God *faithful* ?" I answer, in fulfilling every promise which he hath made, to all to whom it is made, all who fulfil the condition of that promise. More particularly, 1st. † " God is faithful *in that* he will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able to bear." 2d. ‡ " The Lord is faithful to establish and keep you from evil" (if you put your trust in him) from all the evil which you might otherwise suffer, through *unreasonable and wicked men*. \* 3d. § " Quench not the Spirit ; hold fast that which is good ; abstain from all appearance of evil : *and your whole spirit, soul, and body shall be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Faithful is he that calleth you, who will also do it." 4th. Be not disobedient unto the heavenly calling, and § " God is faithful by whom ye were called, to confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless, in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." Yet notwithstanding all this, unless you fulfil the condition, you cannot attain the promise.

" Nay, but are not *all the promises, yea and amen* ?" They are. They are *firm* as the pillars of heaven. Perform the condition ; and the promise is sure. Believe, and thou shalt be saved. " But

\* James i. 17. † 1 Cor. x. 13. ‡ 2 Thess. iii. 2, 3. § 2 Thess. v. 19, &c. § 1 Cor. i. 8, 9.

“ But many promises are absolute and unconditional.” In many, the condition is not exprest. But this does not prove, there is none implied. No promises can be exprest, in a more absolute form, than those above cited from the 89th Psalm. And yet we have seen, a condition was implied even there, though none was exprest.

16. ‘ But there is no condition either exprest or implied, in those words of St. Paul,\* “ I am perswaded, that neither death, nor life, nor height, nor depth, nor any creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Suppose there is not (which will bear a dispute) yet what will this prove? Just thus much, that the apostle was at that time fully perswaded of his own perseverance. And I doubt not, but many believers at this day, have the very same perswasion, termed in scripture, the full assurance of hope. But this does not prove, that every believer shall persevere, any more than that every believer is thus fully perswaded of his perseverance.

IV. 17. Fourthly, Those who are branches of the true vine, of whom Christ says, I am the vine, ye are the branches; may nevertheless so fall from God, as to perish everlastingly.

For thus saith our blessed Lord himself, “ I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

“ Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh it away.

“ I am the vine, ye are the branches. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch and is withered, and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.”

Here we may observe, 1. The persons spoken of were in *Christ, branches of the true vine.*

2. Some of these *branches abide not in Christ, but the Father taketh them away.*

3. The *branches which abide not are cast forth, cast out from Christ and his church.*

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4. They are not only *cast forth but withered*; consequently never grafted in again. Nay,

5. They are not only *cast forth and withered*, but also *cast into the fire*. And,

6. They *are burned*. It is not possible for words more strongly to declare, that even those who are now branches in the true vine, may yet so fall, as to perish everlastingly.

18. By this clear, indisputable declaration of our Lord, we may interpret those which might be otherwise liable to dispute, wherein it is certain, whatever he meant beside, he did not mean to contradict himself. For example, "This is the Father's will, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing." Most sure; *all that God hath given him*, or (as it is exprest in the next verse) "every one which believeth on him," namely, to the end, "he will raise up at the last day," to reign with him for ever.

Again, \* "I am the living bread—If any man eat of this bread, by faith, he shall live for ever." True; if he continue to eat thereof. And who can doubt it?

Again, † "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hands."

In the preceding text, the condition is only implied. In this it is plainly exprest. They are "my sheep" that "hear my voice," that "follow me" in all holiness. And "if you do those things, ye shall never fall." None shall "pluck you out of my hands."

Again, ‡ "Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them unto the end." *Having loved his own*, namely, the apostles (as the very next words, *which were in the world* evidently shew) *he loved them unto the end* of his life, and manifested that love to the last.

19. Once more, § "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are one." Great

\* John vi. 51.

† Chapter x. 14.

‡ John xiii. 1.

§ John xvii. 5. 11.

Great stress has been laid upon this text, and it has been hence inferred, that all *those whom* the Father *had given him* (a phrase frequently occurring in this chapter) must infallibly persevere to the end.

And yet in the very next verse, our Lord himself declares, that one of *those whom* the Father *had given him*, did not persevere unto the end, but perished everlastingly.

His own words are, \* “ Those that thou gavest me, I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition.”

So one even of these was finally lost ! A demonstration that the phrase, *Those whom thou hast given me*, signifies here (if not in most other places too) the twelve apostles, and them only.

20. On this occasion, I cannot but observe another common instance of begging the question, of taking for granted, what ought to be proved : it is usually laid down, as an indisputable truth, that whatever our Lord speaks to or of his apostles, is to be applied to all believers. But this cannot be allowed by any who impartially search the scriptures. They cannot allow, without clear and particular proof, that any one of those texts, which related primarily to the apostles (as all men grant) belong to any but them.

V. 21. Fifthly, Those who so effectually know Christ, as by that knowledge to have escaped the pollutions of the world, may yet fall back into those pollutions, and perish everlastingly.

For thus saith the apostle Peter, † “ If after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (the only possible way of escaping them) they are again entangled therein and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

“ For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they had known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.”

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\* John xvii. v. 12.

† 2 Peter ii. 20, 21.

That the *knowledge of the way of righteousness*, which they had attained, was an inward, experimental knowledge, is evident from that other expression, "They had escaped the pollutions of the world:" an expression parallel to that in the preceding chapter, \* "Having escaped the corruption which is in the world." And in both chapters, this effect is ascribed to the same cause: termed in the first, "The knowledge of him who hath called us to glory and virtue;" in the second, more explicitly, "The knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

And yet they lost that experimental knowledge of Christ and the way of righteousness: they fell back into the same pollutions they had escaped; and were *again entangled therein and overcome. They turned from the holy commandment delivered to them; so that their latter end was worse than their beginning.*

Therefore those who so effectually know Christ, as by that knowledge to have escaped the pollutions of the world, may yet fall back into those pollutions and perish everlastingly.

22. And this is perfectly consistent with St. Peter's words, in the first chapter of his former epistle: "Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." Undoubtedly so are all they who ever attain eternal salvation. It is the power of God only, and not our own, by which we are kept one day or one hour.

VI. 23. Sixthly, Those who see the light of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, and who have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, of the witness and the fruits of the Spirit; may nevertheless so fall from God as to perish everlastingly.

For thus saith the inspired writer to the Hebrews, † "It is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost—if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." Must

\* 2 Peter i. 4.

† Ch. vi. 4, 6. Ephes. i. 17, 18, 19.

Must not every unprejudiced person see the expressions here used are so strong and clear, that they cannot, without gross and palpable wrestling, be understood of any but true believers?

They “were once enlightened:” an expression familiar with the apostle, and never by him applied to any but believers. So, \*\* “The God of our Lord Jesus Christ, give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation.—The eyes of your understanding being *enlightened*, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling.—And what is the exceeding greatness of his power, to us-ward that believe.” So again, \* “God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined into our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.” This is a light which no unbelievers have. They are utter strangers to such enlightening. † “The God of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, should shine unto them.”

“They had tasted of the heavenly gift (emphatically so called) and were made partakers of the *Holy Ghost*.” So St. Peter likewise couples them together; ‡ “Be baptized for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the *Holy Ghost*,” whereby the love of God was shed abroad in their heart, with all the other fruits of the Spirit. Yea, it is remarkable, that our Lord himself in his grand commission to St. Paul (to which the apostle probably alludes in these words) comprises all these three particulars. || “I send thee to open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God” (here contracted into that one expression, *They were enlightened*) “that they may receive forgiveness of sins (the heavenly gift) and an inheritance among them which are sanctified:” which are made partakers of the Holy Ghost, of all the sanctifying influences of the Spirit.

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\*\* Ephes. i. 17, 18, 19. \* 2 Cor. iv. 6. † v. 4. ‡ Acts ii. 38. || Ch. xxvi. ver. 18.

The expression, They *tasted* of the heavenly gift, is taken from the psalmist, § “Taste and see that the Lord is good.” As if he had said, be ye as assured of his love, as of any thing you see with your eyes. And let the assurance thereof be sweet to your soul, as honey is to your tongue.

And yet those who had been thus enlightened, had tasted this gift, and been thus partakers of the Holy Ghost, so fell away, that it was impossible to renew them again to repentance.

“But the apostle only makes a supposition, If they shall fall away.”

I answer, The apostle makes no supposition at all. There is no *if* in the original. The words are, in plain English, “It is impossible to renew again unto repentance, those who were once enlightened and have fallen away :” therefore they must perish everlastingly.

24. “But if so, then farewell all my comfort.”

Then your comfort depends on a poor foundation. My comfort stands not on any opinion, either that a believer can, or cannot fall away, not on the remembrance of any thing wrought in me *yesterday*; but on what is *to-day*. On my present knowledge of God in Christ, reconciling me to himself. On my now beholding the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ; walking in the light as he is in the light, and having fellowship with the Father and with the Son. My comfort is, that through grace I now believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and that his spirit doth bear witness with my spirit, that I am a Child of God. I take comfort in this and this only, that I see Jesus at the right hand of God; that I personally for myself, and not for another, have an hope full of immortality; that I feel the love of God shed abroad in my heart, being crucified to the world, and the world crucified to me. My rejoicing is this, the testimony of my conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, I have my conversation in the world.

Go and find, if you can, a more solid joy, a more blisful comfort, on this side heaven. But this comfort is not shaken, be that opinion true or false; whether the saints in general can or cannot fall.

If you take up with any comfort short of this, you lean on the staff of a broken reed, which will not only not bear your weight, but will enter into your hand and pierce you.

25. Seventhly, Those who live by faith, may yet fall from God, and perish everlastingly.

For thus saith the same inspired writer, \* “The just shall live by faith; but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.” The just, the justified person, shall live by faith, even now shall he live the life which is hid with Christ in God; and if he endure unto the end, he shall live with God for ever. “But if any man draw back, saith the Lord, my soul shall have no pleasure in him:” That is, I will utterly cast him off; and accordingly the drawing back here spoken of, is termed in the verse immediately following, Drawing back to perdition.

“But the person supposed to draw back, is not the same with him that is said to live by faith.”

I answer. 1. Who is it then? Can any man draw back from faith who never came to it? But,

2. Had the text been fairly translated, there had been no pretence for this objection. For the original runs thus: “The just man that lives by faith (so the expression necessarily implies, there being no other nominative to the verb) draws back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.”

“But the apostle adds, we are not of them who draw back unto perdition.” And what will you infer from thence? This is so far from contradicting what has been observed before, that it manifestly confirms it. It is a further proof, that there are those who draw back unto perdition, although the apostle was not of  
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that number. Therefore those who live by faith, may yet fall from God, and perish everlastingly.

26. " But does not God say to every one that lives by faith, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee?"

The whole sentence runs thus: " Let your conversation be without covetousness, and be content with such thing as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." True; provided your conversation be without covetousness, and ye be content with such things as ye have. Then you may boldly say, " The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

Do you not see, 1. That this promise, as here recited, relates wholly to temporal things? 2. That even thus taken it is not absolute but conditional? and, 3. That the condition is expressly mentioned in the very same sentence?

27. Eighthly, Those who are sanctified by the blood of the covenant, may so fall from God, as to perish everlastingly.

For thus again saith the apostle, \* " If we sin wilfully, after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law, died without mercy under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing."

It is undeniably plain, 1. That the person mentioned here, was once sanctified by the blood of the covenant. 2. That he afterwards by known, wilful sin, trod under foot the Son of God: And, 3. That he hereby incurred a sorer punishment than death, namely, death everlasting.

Therefore, those who are sanctified by the blood of the covenant, may yet so fall as to perish everlastingly.

28. " What!

28. "What! Can the blood of Christ burn in hell? Or can the purchase of the blood of Christ go thither?"

I answer, 1. The blood of Christ cannot burn in hell, no more than it can be spilt on the earth. The heavens must contain both his flesh and blood, until the restitution of all things. But,

2. If the oracles of God are true, one who was purchased by the blood of Christ may go thither. For he that was sanctified by the blood of Christ, was purchased by the blood of Christ. But one who was sanctified by the blood of Christ, may nevertheless go to hell; may fall under that fiery indignation, which shall for ever devour the adversaries.

29. "Can a child of God then go to hell? Or can a man be a child of God to-day, and a child of the devil to-morrow? If God is our Father once, is he not our Father always?" I answer,

1. A child of God, that is, a true believer (for *he that believeth is born of God*) while he continues a true believer, cannot go to hell. But, 2. If a believer make shipwreck of the faith, he is no longer a child of God. And then he may go to hell, yea, and certainly will, if he continues in unbelief. 3. If a believer may make shipwreck of the faith, then a man that believes now, may be an unbeliever some time hence; yea, very possibly to-morrow: But if so, he who is a child of God to-day, may be a child of the devil to-morrow. For, 4. God is the Father of them that believe, so long as they believe. But the devil is the father of them that believe not, whether they did once believe or no.

30. The sum of all is this. If the scriptures are true, those who are holy or righteous in the judgment of God himself: those who are endued with the faith that purifies the heart, that produces a good conscience: those who are grafted into the good olive-tree, the spiritual, invisible church: those who are branches of the true vine, of whom Christ says, I am the vine, ye are the branches: those who so effectually know  
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Christ, as by that knowledge to have escaped the pollutions of the world: those who see the light of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ, and who have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, of the witness and of the fruits of the Spirit: those who live by faith in the Son of God: those who are sanctified by the blood of the covenant: may nevertheless so fall from God, as to perish everlastingly.

Therefore let him that standeth, take heed lest he fall.

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## S E C T I O N XXXIX.

### *Of Christian Perfection.*

*A Plain Account of Christian Perfection, by the Rev. John Wesley.*

**W**HAT I purpose in the following papers is, to give a plain and distinct account of the doctrine of Christian Perfection.

For this purpose I shall endeavour to shew, 1. In what sense Christians *are not*, 2. In what sense they *are perfect*.

I. In what sense they are not: They *are not perfect in knowledge*. They are not free from *ignorance*, no, nor from *mistake*. We are no more to expect any living man to be *infallible* than to be omniscient. They are not free from *infirmities*; such as weakness or slowness of understanding, irregular quickness or heaviness of imagination. Such in another kind are, impropriety of language, ungracefulness of pronunciation, to which one might add a thousand nameless defects, either in conversation or behaviour. *N. B.* From such infirmities as these none are perfectly freed, till their spirit returns to God. Neither can we expect till then to be wholly freed from *temptation*: for *the servant is not above his*

*his master.* But neither in this sense is there any *absolute Perfection* on earth. There is no *Perfection of degrees*, none which does not admit of a continual increase.

II. In what sense then are they *perfect*? Observe we are not now speaking of babes in Christ, but adult Christians. But even babes in Christ are so far perfect as not to *commit sin*. This St. *John* affirms expressly.

But does not the scripture say, *A just man sinneth seven times a day*? It does not. Indeed it says, *A just man falleth seven times*. But this is quite another thing. For, first, the words *a day*, are not in the text. Secondly, here is no mention of *falling into sin* at all. What is here mentioned is, *falling into temporal affliction*.

But St. *James* says, ch. iii. 2. “*In many things we offend all.*” True: but who are the persons here spoken of? Why, those *many masters* or teachers whom God had not sent: not the apostle himself, nor any real Christian. That in the word *we* (used by a figure of speech, common in all other, as well as the inspired writings) the apostle could not possibly include himself, or any other true believer, appears, first, from the ninth verse, *Therewith bless we God, and therewith curse we men*. Surely not *we apostles*! Not *we believers*! Secondly, From the words preceding the text: *My brethren, be not many masters or teachers, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation. For in many things we offend all.* We! Who? Not the apostles nor true believers, but they who were to receive the greater condemnation, because of those many offences. Nay, thirdly, the verse itself proves, that *we offend all* cannot be spoken either of all men, or of all Christians. For in it immediately follows the mention of a man who *offends not*, as the *we* first mentioned did: from whom therefore he is professedly contradistinguished, and pronounced a *perfect man*.

“But St. *John* himself says, *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves. And, if we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.*”

I answer, 1. The tenth verse fixes the sense of the eighth: *If we say we have no sin* in the former, being explained by *If we say we have not sinned*, in the latter verse: 2. The point under consideration is not, whether we have or have not sinned *heretofore*; and neither of these verses asserts, that we do sin or commit sin *now*: 3. The ninth verse explains both the eighth and tenth. *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* As if he had said, I have before affirmed, *The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin.* And no man can say, I need it not: I have no sin to be cleansed from. *If we say we have no sin, that we have not sinned, we deceive ourselves, and make God a liar.* But if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, not only to forgive us our sins, but also to cleanse us from all unrighteousness, that we may go and sin no more. In conformity therefore both to the doctrine of St. John, and the whole tenor of the New Testament, we fix this Conclusion, A Christian is so far perfect as not to commit sin.

This is the glorious privilege of every Christian, yea, though he be but a babe in Christ. But it is only of grown Christians it can be affirmed, they are in such a sense perfect, as, secondly, to be freed from evil thoughts and evil tempers. First, from evil or sinful thoughts. Indeed, whence should they spring? *Out of the heart of man, if at all, proceed evil thoughts.* If therefore the heart be no longer evil, then evil thoughts no longer proceed out of it; for *a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit.*

And as they are freed from evil thoughts, so likewise from evil tempers. Every one of these can say with St. Paul, *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live: yet not I, but Christ liveth in me:* words that manifestly describe a deliverance from inward, as well as from outward sin. This is exprest both negatively, *I live not:* my evil nature, the body of sin is destroyed: and positively, *Christ liveth in me,* and therefore all that is holy, and just, and good. Indeed, both these, *Christ liveth in me, and I live not,* are inseparably connected.

needed. For what communion hath light with darkness, or Christ with Belial?

He therefore who liveth in these Christians, hath *purified their hearts by faith*: insomuch that every one that has Christ in him, *the hope of glory, purifieth himself even as he is pure*. He is purified from pride: for Christ was lowly in heart. He is pure from evil desire and self-will: for Christ desired only to do the will of his Father. And he is pure from anger, in the common sense of the word; for Christ was meek and gentle. I say, in the common sense of the word: for he is *angry* at sin, while he is grieved for the sinner. He feels a displacency at every offence against God, and tender compassion to the offender.

Thus doth Jesus save his people from their sins, not only from outward sins, but from the sins of their hearts. "True," say some, "but not till death, not in this world." Nay, St. John says, *Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world*. The apostle here, beyond all contradiction, speaks of himself and other living Christians, of whom he flatly affirms, that not only at or after death, but *in this world* they are *as their master*.

Exactly agreeable to this are his words in the first chapter: *God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin*. And again: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*. Now it is evident, the apostle here speaks of a deliverance wrought in this world. For he saith not, The blood of Christ *will* cleanse (at the hour of death, or in the day of judgment) but it *cleanseth* at the time present, us living Christians, *from all sin*. And it is equally evident, that if any sin remain, we are not cleansed from all sin. If any unrighteousness remain in the soul, it is not cleansed from all unrighteousness. Neither let any say, that this relates to justification only, or the cleansing us  
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from the guilt of sin: first, because this is confounding together what the apostle clearly distinguishes, who mentions first, *to forgive us our sins*, and then to cleanse us from all unrighteousness: secondly, because this is asserting justification by works, in the strongest sense possible: it is making all inward, as well as all outward holiness, necessarily previous to justification. For if the cleansing here spoken of is no other than the cleansing us from the guilt of sin, then we are not cleansed from guilt, that is, not justified, unless on condition of walking in the light as he is in the light. It remains then, that Christians are saved in this world from all sin, from all unrighteousness: that they are now in such a sense perfect as not to commit sin, and to be freed from evil thoughts and evil tempers.

This great gift of God, the salvation of their souls, is no other than the image of God stamped on their hearts. It is *a renewal in the spirit of their minds, after the likeness of him that created them*. God hath now laid *the ax unto the root of the tree, purifying their hearts by faith*, and “*cleansing all the thoughts of their hearts by the inspiration of his holy Spirit*.” Having this hope, that they shall see God as he is, they *purify themselves even as he is pure*, and are *holy, as he that hath called them is holy, in all manner of conversation*. Not that they have already attained all that they shall attain, *either are already (in this sense) perfect*. But they daily go on from strength to strength; beholding now, *as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, they are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, by the Spirit of the Lord*.

And where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty, such liberty, *from the law of sin and death*, as the children of this world will not believe, though a man declare it unto them. *The Son hath made them free who are thus born of God, from that great root of sin and bitterness, Pride*. They feel that *all their sufficiency is of God*, that it is he alone who is *in all their thoughts*, and *worketh in them both to will and to do of his good pleasure*. They feel that it is not they that speak, but the Spirit of their Father who speaketh in them, and that  
whatsoever

whatsoever is done by their hands, *the Father who is in them, he doth the works.* So that God is to them all in all, and they are nothing in his sight. They are freed from *Self-will*, as desiring nothing but the holy and perfect will of God, and continually crying in their inmost soul, 'Father, thy will be done.' At all times their souls are even and calm, their hearts are steadfast and unmoveable. Their peace, flowing as a river, *passeth all understanding*, and they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

Not that every one is a child of the devil, till he is thus renewed in love. On the contrary, whoever has a sure confidence in God, that through the merits of Christ, his sins are forgiven, he is a child of God, and if he abide in him, an heir of all the promises. Neither ought he in any wise to *cast away his confidence*, or to deny the faith he has received, because it is weak, or because it is *tried with fire*, so that his soul is in *heaviness through manifold temptations*.

Neither dare we affirm, as some have done, that *all this salvation is given at once*. There is indeed an *instantaneous* (as well as a *gradual*) work of God in his children: and there wants not, we know, a cloud of witnesses, who have received, in one moment, either a clear sense of the forgiveness of their sins, or the abiding witness of the Holy Spirit. But we do not know a single instance, in any place, of a person's receiving *in one and the same moment*, remission of sins, the abiding witness of the Spirit, and a new, a clean heart.

Indeed how God *may* work, we cannot tell: But the general manner wherein he *does* work is this; those who once trusted in themselves, that they were righteous, that they were *rich, and increased in goods, and had need of nothing*, are by the Spirit of God applying his word, convinced that they are poor and naked. All the things that they have done are brought to their remembrance, and set in array before them, so that they see the wrath of God hanging over their heads, and feel that they deserve the damnation of hell. In their trouble they cry unto the Lord, and he shews them  
that

that he hath taken away their sins, and opens the kingdom of heaven in their hearts; *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost*. Sorrow and pain are fled away, and *sin has no more dominion over them*. Knowing they are *justified freely through faith in Christ's blood*, they *have peace with God through Jesus Christ*; they *rejoice in hope of the glory of God*, and *the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts*.

In this peace they remain for days, or weeks, or months, and commonly suppose, they shall not know war any more: till some of their old enemies, their bosom-sins, or the sin which *did* most easily beset them (perhaps anger or desire) assault them again, and thrust sore at them that they may fall. Then arises fear, that they shall not endure to the end, and often doubt, whether God has not forgotten them, or whether they did not deceive themselves, in thinking their sins were forgiven. Under these clouds, especially if they reason with the devil, they go *mourning* all the day long. But it is *scidom long* before their Lord answers for himself, sending them the Holy Ghost to *comfort* them, to bear witness continually with their spirits, that they are the children of God. Then they are indeed *meek*, and gentle, and teachable, even as a little child. And now first do they see the ground of their heart, which God before would not disclose unto them, lest the soul should fail before him, and the spirit which he had made. Now they see all the hidden abominations there, the depths of pride, self-will, and hell, yet, having the witness in themselves, 'Thou art an heir of God, a joint-heir with Christ,' even in the midst of this fiery trial, which continually heightens both the strong sense they then have of their inability to help themselves, and the inexpressible *hunger* they feel *after* a full renewal in the image of God in *righteousness and true holiness*. Then God is mindful of the desire of them that fear him, and gives them a single eye, and a pure heart: he stamps upon them his own image and superscription: he createth them anew in Christ Jesus; he *cometh unto them with his*

his Son and Blessed Spirit, and fixing his abode in their souls, bringeth them into the *rest* which *remaineth for the people of God*.

To cast a fuller light on this important subject, I shall lay before the reader the Minutes of several of our general Conferences on this weighty, this momentous doctrine.

1. On Monday, *June 25th*, 1744, our first Conference began, six clergymen, and all our preachers being present. The next morning we seriously considered the doctrine of Sanctification or Perfection. The questions asked concerning it, and the substance of the answers given were as follow:

Q. What is it to be *sanctified*?

A. To be renewed in the image of God, in *righteousness and true holiness*.

Q. What is implied in being a *perfect Christian*?

A. The loving God with all our heart, and mind, and soul. *Deut. vi. 5*.

Q. Does this imply that *all inward sin* is taken away?

A. Undoubtedly: or how can we be said to be *saved from all our uncleanness*? *Ezek. 36*.

2. Our second Conference began *Aug. 1*, 1745. The next morning we spoke of Sanctification, as follows:

Q. When does inward sanctification begin?

A. In the moment a man is justified. Yet sin remains in him, yea, the seed of sin, till he is *sanctified throughout*. From that time a believer gradually dies to sin, and grows in grace.

Q. Is this ordinarily given till a little before death?

A. It is not to those who expect it no sooner.

Q. In what manner should we preach Sanctification?

A. Always by way of promise; always *drawing*, rather than *driving*.

3. Our third Conference began Tuesday, *May 26*, 1746.

In this we carefully read over the minutes of the two preceding Conferences, to observe whether any thing contained

contained therein might be retrenched or altered on more mature consideration. But we did not see cause to alter in any respect what we had agreed on before.

4. Our fourth Conference began on Tuesday, *June* the 16th, 1747. As several persons were present, who did not believe the doctrine of perfection, we agreed to examine it from the foundation.

In order to this, it was asked,

“How much is allowed by our brethren who differ from us, with regard to entire sanctification?”

*A.* They grant, 1. That every one must be entirely sanctified in the article of death: 2. That till then a believer may daily grow in grace, come nearer and nearer to perfection: 3. That we ought to be continually pressing after it, and to exhort all others so to do.

Q. What is the point where we divide?

*A.* It is this: should we expect to be saved from *all sin* before the article of death?

Q. Is there any clear scripture *promise* of this, That God will save us from *all sin*?

*A.* There is. *Psal. cxxx. 8. He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.*

This is more largely exprest in the prophecy of *Ezekiel*; *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you—I will also save you from all your uncleannesses, chap. xxxvi. ver. 25. 29.* No promise can be more clear. And to this the apostle plainly refers in that exhortation, *Having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God; 2. Cor. vii. 1.* Equally clear and express is that ancient promise, *The Lord thy God will circumcise thy heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul. Deut. xxx. 6.*

Q. But does any *assertion* answerable to this, occur in the New Testament?

*A.* There does; and that laid down in the plainest terms. So *1 John iii. 8. For this purpose, the Son of God*

God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil: the works of the devil, without any limitation or restriction: but all sin is the work of the devil. Parallel to which is the assertion of St. Paul, Eph. v. 25. 27. *Christ loved the church, and gave himself for it—that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it might be holy and without blemish.*

And to the same effect is his assertion in the eighth of the Romans, verse 3, 4. *God sent his Son—that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.*

Q. Does the New Testament afford any farther ground for expecting to be saved from all sin?

A. Undoubtedly it does, both in those prayers and commands, which are equivalent to the strongest assertions.

Q. What prayers do you mean?

A. Prayers for entire Sanctification, which, were there no such thing, would be mere mockery of God. Such in particular are,—1. *Deliver us from evil.* Now when this is done, when we are delivered from all evil, there can be no sin remaining. 2. *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also who shall believe on me through their word: that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one;* John xvii. ver. 20, 21. 23. 3. *I bow my knees unto the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,—that he would grant you—that ye being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge. That ye may be filled with all the fulness of God;* Eph. iii. 14, &c. 4. *The very God of peace sanctify you wholly. And I pray God, your whole spirit, soul, and body, may be preserved blameless, unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* 1 Thess. v. 23.

Q. What command is there to the same effect?

A. 1. *Be ye perfect, as your Father who is in heaven is perfect;* Matt. v. 48. 2. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy*

*God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind; Matt. xxii. 37. But if the love of God fill all the heart, there can be no sin there.*

Q. But how does it appear, that this is to be done before the article of death?

A. 1. From the very nature of a command, which is not given to the dead but to the living. Therefore *thou shalt love God with all thy heart*, cannot mean, *Thou shalt do this when thou diest*, but while thou livest.

2. From exprefs texts of scripture. 1. *The grace of God that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that, denying ungodly and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world: looking for the glorious appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works; Tit. ii. 11—14.* 2. *He hath raised up an horn of salvation for us—to perform the mercy promised to our fathers; the oath which he swore to our father Abraham, that he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hands of our enemies, should serve him without fear, in holiness, and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. Luke i. ver. 69, &c.*

Q. Is there any example in scripture, of persons who had attained to this?

A. Yes: St. *John* and all those of whom he says, *Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world.* 1 John iv. 17.

Q. Are we not apt to have a secret distaste to any who say they are saved from all sin?

A. It is very possible we may, and that upon several grounds: partly from a concern for the good of souls, who may be hurt, if these are not what they profess: partly from a kind of implicit envy at those who speak of higher attainments than our own: and partly from our natural slowness and unreadiness of heart, to believe the works of God.

Q. Why may we not continue in the joy of faith, till we are perfected in love?

A. Why

*A.* Why indeed? Since holy grief does not quench this joy: since even while we are under the cross, while we deeply partake of the sufferings of Christ, we may rejoice with joy unspeakable.

5. At the Conference in the year 1759, perceiving some danger that a diversity of sentiments should insensibly steal in among us, we again largely considered this doctrine. And soon after I published "Thoughts on Christian perfection," prefaced with the following advertisement:

"The following tract is by no means designed, to gratify the curiosity of any man. It is not intended to prove the doctrine at large, in opposition to those who explode and ridicule it: no, nor to answer the numerous objections against it, which may be raised even by serious men. All I intend here, is simply to declare what are my sentiments on this head: what Christian Perfection does, according to my apprehension include, and what it does not; and to add a few practical observations and directions relative to the subject.

"As these thoughts were at first thrown together by way of question and answer, I let them continue in the same form.

"Q. What is Christian Perfection?

*A.* The loving God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength. This implies, that no wrong temper, none contrary to love, remains in the soul: and that all the thoughts, words and actions, are governed by pure love.

Q. Do you affirm, that this perfection excludes all infirmities, ignorance, and mistake?

*A.* I continually affirm quite the contrary, and always have done so?

Q. But how can every thought, word and work be governed by pure love, and the man be subject at the same time to ignorance and mistake?

*A.* I see no contradiction here. "A man may be filled with pure love, and still be liable to mistake." Indeed I do not expect to be freed from actual mistakes, till this mortal puts on immortality. I believe  
this

this to be a natural consequence of the soul's dwelling in flesh and blood. For we cannot now *think* at all, but by the mediation of those bodily organs, which have suffered equally with the rest of our frame. And hence we cannot avoid sometimes *thinking wrong*, till this corruptible shall have put on incorruption.

But we may carry this thought farther yet. A mistake in judgment may possibly occasion a mistake in practice. For instance : Mr. de Renty's mistake touching the nature of mortification, arising from prejudice of education, occasioned that practical mistake, his wearing an iron girdle. And a thousand such instances there may be, even in those who are in the highest state of grace. Yet where every word and action springs from love, such a mistake is not properly a *sin*. However it cannot bear the rigour of God's justice, but needs the atoning blood.

2. What was the judgment of all our brethren, who met at *Bristol* in August 1758, on this head?

A. It was expressed in these words : 1. Every one may mistake as long as he lives : 2. A mistake in *opinion* may occasion a mistake in *practice* : 3. Every such mistake is a transgression of the perfect law. Therefore, 4. Every such mistake, were it not for the blood of atonement, would expose to eternal damnation. 5. It follows, that the most perfect have continual need of the merits of Christ, even for their actual transgressions, and may say for themselves, as well as for their brethren, *Forgive us our trespasses*.

This easily accounts for what might otherwise seem to be utterly unaccountable : namely, that those who are not offended when we speak of the highest degree of love, yet will not hear of living *without sin*. The reason is, they know all men are liable to mistake, and that in practice as well as in judgment. But they do not know, or do not observe, that this is not sin, if love is the sole principle of action.

2. But still, if they live without sin, does not this exclude the necessity of a Mediator? At least, is it not plain, that they stand no longer in need of Christ in his priestly office?

A. Far

*A.* Far from it. None feel their need of Christ like these : none so entirely depend upon him. For Christ does not give life to the soul separate from, but in and with himself. Hence his words are equally true of all men, in whatsoever state of grace they are, *As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me : without (or separate from) me, ye can do nothing.*

In every state we need Christ in the following respects : 1. Whatever grace we receive, it is a free gift from him : 2. We receive it as his purchase, merely in consideration of the price he paid : 3. We have this grace not only *from* Christ, but *in* him. For our perfection is not like that of a tree, which flourishes by the sap derived from its own root, but, as was said before, like that of a branch, which united to the vine, bears fruit, but severed from it, *is dried up and withered* : 4. All our blessings, temporal, spiritual, and eternal, depend on his intercession for us, which is one branch of his priestly office, whereof therefore we have always equal need : 5. The best of men still need Christ in his priestly office, to atone for their omissions, their shortcomings (as some not improperly speak) their mistakes in judgment and practice, and their defects of various kinds. For these are all deviations from the perfect law, and consequently need an atonement. Yet that they are not properly sins, we apprehend may appear from the words of St. Paul, *He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law ; for love is the fulfilling of the law\**. Now mistakes, and whatever infirmities necessarily flow from the corruptible state of the body, are no way contrary to love, nor therefore in the scripture sense, *sin*.

To explain myself a little farther on this head : 1. Not only *sin properly so called*, that is, a voluntary transgression of a known law, but *sin, improperly so called*, that is, an involuntary transgression of a divine law, known or unknown, needs the atoning blood. 2. I believe

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there

\* Romans xiii. 8, 10.

there is no such perfection in this life, as excludes these involuntary transgressions, which I apprehend to be naturally consequent on the ignorance and mistakes inseparable from mortality. 3. Therefore *sinless perfection* is a phrase I never use, lest I should *seem* to contradict myself. 4. I believe a person filled with the love of God, is still liable to these involuntary transgressions. 5. Such transgressions you may call *sins*, if you please, I do not, for the reasons above-mentioned.

Q. What advice would you give to those that do, and those that do not call them so?

A. Let those that do not call them *sins*, never think that themselves, or any other persons, are in such a state, as that they can stand before infinite justice without a Mediator. This must argue either the deepest ignorance, or the highest arrogance and presumption.

Let those who do call them so, beware how they confound these *defects* with *sins*, properly so called. But how will they avoid it? How will these be distinguished from those, if they are all promiscuously called *sins*? I am much afraid, if we should allow any *sins* to be consistent with perfection, few would confine the idea to those *defects*, concerning which only the assertion could be true.

Q. But how can a liableness to mistake consist with perfect love? Is not a person who is perfected in love, every moment under its influence? And can any mistake flow from pure love?

A. I answer, 1. Many mistakes may *consist* with pure love: 2. Some may *accidentally flow* from it. I mean, love itself may incline us to mistake. The pure love of our neighbour springing from the love of God, *thinketh no evil, believeth and hopeth all things*. Now this very temper, unsuspicious, ready to believe and hope the best of all men, may occasion our thinking some men better than they really are. Here then is a manifest mistake, *accidentally flowing* from pure love.

Q. How shall we avoid setting perfection too high or too low?

A. By

A. By keeping to the bible, and setting it just as high as the scripture does. It is nothing higher and nothing lower than this: the pure love of God and man: the loving God with all our heart and soul, and our neighbour as ourselves: it is love governing the heart and life, running through all our tempers, words, and actions.

Q. Suppose one had attained to this, would you advise him to speak of it?

A. At first perhaps he would scarce be able to refrain, the fire would be so hot within him: his desire to declare the loving-kindness of the Lord, carrying him away like a torrent. But afterwards he might: and then it would be advisable, not to speak of it to them that know not God. It is most likely it would only provoke them to contradict and blaspheme: nor to others without some particular reason, without some good in view. And then he should have especial care, to avoid all appearance of boasting; to speak with the deepest humility and reverence, giving all the glory to God.

Q. But would it not be better, to be intirely silent? Not to speak of it at all?

A. By silence he might avoid many crosses, which will naturally and necessarily ensue, if he simply declare, even among believers, what God has wrought in his soul. If therefore such an one were to confer with flesh and blood, he would be entirely silent. But this could not be done with a clear conscience; for undoubtedly he ought to speak. *Men* do not light a candle to put it under a bushel: much less does the all-wise God. He does not raise such a monument of his power and love, to hide it from all mankind. Rather he intends it as a general blessing, to those who are simple of heart. He designs thereby not barely the happiness of that individual person, but the animating and encouraging others, to follow after the same blessing. His will is, *that many shall see it and rejoice, and put their trust in the Lord.* Nor does any thing under heaven more quicken the desires of those  
who

who are justified, than to converse with those whom they believe to have experienced a still higher salvation. This places that salvation full in their view, and increases their hunger and thirst after it: an advantage which must have been entirely lost, had the person so saved buried himself in silence.

Q. But is there no way to prevent those crosses, which usually fall on those who speak of being thus saved?

A. It seems they cannot be prevented altogether, while so much of nature remains even in believers. But something might be done, if the preacher in every place would, 1. Talk freely with all who speak thus: and, 2. Labour to prevent the unjust or unkind treatment of those, in favour of whom there is reasonable proof.

Q. What is reasonable proof? How may we certainly know one that is saved from all sin?

A. We cannot *infallibly* know one that is thus saved (no, nor even one that is justified) unless it should please God to endow us with the miraculous discernment of spirits. But we apprehend these would be sufficient proofs to any reasonable man, and such as would leave little room to doubt either the truth or depth of the work: 1. If we had clear evidence of his exemplary behaviour, for some time before his supposed change. This would give us reason to believe, he would not *lie for God*, but speak neither more nor less than he felt. 2. If he gave a distinct account of the time and manner wherein the change was wrought, with sound speech which could not be reprov'd—and, 3. If it appeared that all his subsequent words and actions were holy and unblamable.

The short of the matter is this: 1. I have abundant reason to believe, this person will not lie. 2. He testifies before God, "I feel no sin, but all love: I pray, rejoice, and give thanks without ceasing: and I have as clear an inward witness, that I am fully renewed, as that I am justified." Now, if I have nothing to oppose to this plain testimony, I ought in reason to believe it.

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It avails nothing to object, " But I know several things wherein he is quite mistaken." For it has been allowed, that all who are in the body, are liable to mistake : and that a mistake in judgment may sometimes occasion a mistake in practice : (though great care is to be taken, that no ill use be made of this concession.) For instance : Even one that is perfected in love, may mistake with regard to another person, and may think him, in a particular case, to be more or less faulty than he really is. And hence he may speak to him with more or less severity than the truth requires. And in this sense (though that be not the primary meaning of St. *James*) *In many things we offend all.*— This therefore is no proof at all, that the person so speaking is not perfect.

Q. But is it not a proof, if he is *surprized or fluttered* by a noise, a fall, or some sudden danger?

A. It is not : for one may start, tremble, change colour, or be otherwise disordered in body, while the soul is calmly staid on God, and remains in perfect peace. Nay, the mind itself may be deeply distressed, may be exceeding sorrowful, may be perplexed and pressed down by heaviness and anguish, even to agony, while the heart cleaves to God by perfect love, and the will is wholly resigned to him. Was it not so with the Son of God himself? Does any child of man endure the distress, the anguish, the agony, which he sustained? And yet he *knew no sin*.

Q. But can any one who has a pure heart prefer pleasing to unpleasing food? Or use any pleasure of sense which is not strictly necessary? If so, how do they differ from others?

A. The difference between these and others in taking pleasant food, is, .1. They need none of these things to make them happy; for they have a spring of happiness within. They see and love God. Hence they *rejoice evermore, and in every thing give thanks.*—

2. They may *use* them, but they do not *seek* them.—

3. They use them *sparingly*, and not for the sake of the thing itself. This being premised, we answer directly,

rectly, such an one may use pleasing food, without the danger which attends those who are not saved from sin. He may prefer it to unpleasing, though equally wholesome food, as a means of increasing thankfulness, with a single eye to God, *who giveth us all things richly to enjoy*: on the same principle, he may smell to a flower, or eat a bunch of grapes, or take any other pleasure which does not lessen but increase his delight in God. Therefore neither can we say, that one perfected in love would be incapable of marriage, and of worldly business: if he were called thereto, he would be more capable than ever; as being able to do all things without hurry or carefulness, without any distraction of spirit.

Q. But if two perfect Christians had children, how could they be born in sin, since there was none in the parents?

A. It is a possible, but not a probable case. But waving this, I answer, sin is entailed upon us, not by our *immediate*, but by our first parents. *In Adam all died: by the disobedience of one, all men were made sinners*: all men without exception who were in his loins, when he ate the forbidden fruit.

We have a remarkable illustration of this in gardening. Grafts on a crab-stock bear excellent fruit. But sow the kernels of this fruit, and what will be the event? They produce as mere crabs as ever were eaten.

Q. But what does the perfect one do more than others? More than common believers?

A. Perhaps nothing: so may the providence of God have hedged him in, by outward circumstances. Perhaps not so much; (though he desires and longs to *spend and be spent* for God:) at least not externally: he neither speaks so many words, nor does so many works. As neither did our Lord himself speak so many words, or do so many, no, nor so great works, as some of his apostles (*John xiv. 12.*) But what then? This is no proof that he has not more grace: and by this God measures the outward work. Hear ye Him. *Verily I say unto you, this poor widow has cast in more than they*  
all.

*all.* Verily, this poor man, with his few, broken words, hath spoken more than they all. Verily, this poor woman, that hath given a cup of cold water, hath done more than they all! O cease to *judge according to appearance*, and learn to *judge righteous judgment!*

2. But is not this a proof against him? I feel no power either in his words or prayer?

*A.* It is not: for perhaps that is your own fault. You are not likely to feel any power therein, if any of these hindrances lie in the way; 1. Your own *deadness* of soul. The dead Pharisees felt *no power* even in his words, who *spake as never man spake*: 2. The *guilt* of some unrepented sin, lying upon the conscience: 3. *Prejudice* toward him of any kind: 4. Your *not believing* that state to be attainable, wherein he professes to be: 5. Believing it to be *ungodliness* to think or own he has attained it: 6. *Over-valuing* or *idolizing* him: 7. *Over-valuing yourself* and your own judgment. If any of these is the case, what wonder is it, that you feel no power in any thing he says? But do not others feel it? If they do, your argument falls to the ground. And if they do not, do none of these hindrances lie in *their* way too? You must be certain of this before you can build any argument thereon. And even then your argument will prove no more, than that grace and gifts do not always go together.

“ But he does not come up to *my Idea* of a perfect Christian.” And perhaps no one ever did or ever will. For *your idea* may go *beyond*, or at least *beside* the scriptural account. It may include *more* than the bible includes therein, or however *something* which that does not include. Scripture perfection is, pure love filling the heart and governing all the words and actions. If your idea includes any thing *more*, or any thing *else*, it is not scriptural: and then no wonder that a scripturally-perfect Christian does not come up to it.

I fear many stumble on this stumbling-block. They include as many ingredients as they please, not according to scripture, but their own imagination, in their  
*idea*

*idea* of one that is perfect; and then readily deny any one to be such, who does not answer that imaginary idea.

The more care should we take, to keep the simple, scriptural account continually in our eye. Pure love reigning alone in the heart and life, this is the whole of scriptural perfection.

Q. When may a person judge himself to have attained this?

A. When after having been fully convinced of inbred sin, by a far deeper and clearer conviction, than that he experienced before justification, and after having experienced a gradual mortification of it, he experiences a total death to sin, and an entire renewal in the love and image of God, so as to *rejoice evermore, to pray without ceasing, and in every thing to give thanks.* Not that "to feel all love and no sin," is a sufficient proof. Several have experienced this for a time, before their souls were fully renewed. None therefore ought to believe, that the work is done, till there is added the testimony of the Spirit, witnessing his entire sanctification, as clearly as his justification.

Q. But whence is it, that some imagine they are thus sanctified, when in reality they are not?

A. It is hence: They do not judge by *all* the preceding marks, but either by *part* of them, or by *others*, that are ambiguous. But I know no instance of a person attending to them all, and yet deceived in this matter. I believe there can be none in the world. If a man be deeply and fully convinced, after justification, of inbred sin; if he then experience a gradual mortification of sin, and afterwards an entire renewal in the image of God: if to this change, immensely greater than that wrought, when he was justified, be added a clear, direct witness of the renewal: I judge it next to impossible this man should be deceived herein. And if one whom I know to be a man of veracity, testify these things to me, I ought not, without some sufficient reason, to reject his testimony.

Q. Is

Q. Is this death to sin, and renewal in love, gradual or instantaneous?

A. A man may be *dying* for some time; yet he does not, properly speaking, *die*, till the instant the soul is separated from the body: and in that instant he lives the life of eternity. In like manner, he may be *dying to sin* for some time: yet he is not *dead to sin*, until sin is separated from his soul. And in that instant he lives the full life of love. And as the change undergone when the body dies, is of a different kind, and infinitely greater than any we had known before, yea, such as till then it is impossible to conceive: so the change wrought when the soul dies to sin, is of a different kind, and infinitely greater than any before, and than any can conceive till he experiences it. Yet he still grows in grace, in the knowledge of Christ, in the love and image of God: and will do so, not only till death, but to all eternity.

Q. How are we to wait for this change?

A. Not in careless indifference or indolent inactivity: but in vigorous, universal obedience, in a zealous keeping of all the commandments, in watchfulness and painfulness, in denying ourselves, and taking up our cross daily; as well as in earnest prayer and fasting, and a close attendance on all the ordinances of God. And if any man dream of attaining it any other way (yea, or of *keeping* it, when it is attained, when he has received it even in the largest measure) he deceiveth his own soul. It is true we receive it by simple faith. But God does not, will not give that faith, unless we seek it with all diligence, in the way which he hath ordained.

This consideration may satisfy those who enquire, Why so few have received the blessing? Enquire, how many are seeking it in *this way*. And you have a sufficient answer.

Prayer especially is wanting. Who *continues instant* therein? Who *wrestles with God* for this very thing? So ye have not, because ye *ask not*: or because ye *ask amiss*, namely, "That you may be renewed *before you die*."

Before you die ! Will that content you ? Nay, but ask that it may be done *now* ! To-day ! While it is called to-day ! Do not call this " setting God a time." Certainly *to-day* is *his time* as well as to-morrow. Make haste, man, make haste ! Let

Thy soul break out in strong desire  
The perfect blifs to prove !  
Thy longing heart be all on fire  
To be dissolv'd in love !

Q. But may we continue in peace and joy, till we are perfect in love ?

A. Certainly we may ; for the kingdom of God is not divided against itself. Therefore let not believers be discouraged from *rejoicing in the Lord always*. And yet we may be sensibly pained at the sinful nature that still remains in us. It is good for us to have a piercing sense of this, and a vehement desire to be delivered from it. But this should only incite us the more zealously to fly every moment to our strong Helper, the more earnestly to *press forward to the mark, the prize of our high calling in Christ Jesus*. And when the sense of our sin most abounds, the sense of his love should much more abound.

Q. How should we treat those who think they have attained ?

A. Examine them candidly, and exhort them to pray fervently that God would shew them all that is in their hearts. The most earnest exhortations to abound in every grace, and the strongest cautions to avoid all evil, are given throughout the New Testament, to those who are in the highest state of grace. But this should be done with the utmost tenderness, and without any harshness, sternness, or sourness. We should carefully avoid the very appearance of anger, unkindness, or contempt. Leave it to *Satan* thus to tempt, and to his children to cry out, *Let us examine him with despitefulness and torture, that we may know his meekness, and prove his patience*. If they are faithful to the grace given,

given, they are in no danger of perishing by a mistake: no, not if they remain in that mistake till their spirit is returning to God.

Q. But what hurt can it do to deal harshly with them?

A. Either they are mistaken or they are not. If they are, it may destroy their souls. This is nothing impossible, no, nor improbable. It may so enrage or so discourage them, that they will sink, and rise no more. If they are not mistaken, it may grieve those whom God has not grieved, and do much hurt unto our own souls. For undoubtedly he that toucheth them, toucheth as it were the apple of God's eye. If they are indeed full of his Spirit, to behave unkindly or contemptuously to them, is doing no little despite to the Spirit of grace. Hereby likewise we feed and increase in ourselves evil surmising and many wrong tempers. To instance only one. What self-sufficiency is this, to set ourselves up for inquisitors-general, for peremptory judges in these deep things of God? Are we qualified for the office? Can we pronounce in all cases, How far infirmity reaches? What may, and what may not be resolved into it? What may in all circumstances, and what may not, consist with perfect love? Can we precisely determine, How it will influence the look, the gesture, the tone of voice? If we can, doubtless we are *the men, and wisdom shall die with us!*

Q. But if they are displeased at our not believing them, is not this a full proof against them?

A. According as that displeasure is: if they are angry, it is a proof against them: if they are grieved, it is not. They ought to be grieved, if we disbelieve a real work of God, and thereby deprive ourselves of the advantage we might have received from it. And we may easily mistake this grief for anger, as the outward expressions of both are much alike.

Q. But is it not well to *find out* those, who fancy they have attained, when they have not?

A. It is well to do it by mild, loving examination. But it is not well to triumph even over these. It is  
extremely

extremely wrong, if we *find* such an instance, to rejoice, as if we had found great spoils. Ought we not rather to grieve, to be deeply concerned, to let our eyes run down with tears? Here is one who *seemed* to be a living proof of God's power to *save to the uttermost*, but, alas! it is not as we hoped! He is *weighed in the balance, and found wanting!* And is this matter of joy? Ought we not to rejoice a thousand times more, if we can find nothing but pure love?

“ But he is deceived.” What then? It is a harmless mistake, while he feels nothing but love in his heart. It is a mistake which generally argues great grace, an high degree both of holiness and happiness. This should be a matter of real joy to all that are simple of heart: not the mistake itself, but the height of grace which for a time occasions it. I rejoice that this soul is always happy in Christ, always full of prayer and thanksgiving. I rejoice that he feels no unholy temper, but the pure love of God continually. And I *will* rejoice, if sin is *suspended*, till it is totally *destroyed*.

Q. Is there no danger then in a man's being thus deceived?

A. Not at the time that he feels no sin. There was danger before, and there will be again, when he comes into fresh trials. But so long as he feels nothing but love animating all his thoughts, and words, and actions, he is in no danger: he is not only happy, but safe, *under the shadow of the Almighty*. And, for God's sake, let him continue in that love as long as he can: mean time you may do well, to warn him of the danger that *will be*, if his love grow cold and sin revive, even the danger of casting away hope, and supposing, that because he hath not attained yet, therefore he never shall.

Q. But what if none have attained it yet? What if all who think so are deceived?

A. Convince me of this, and I will preach it no more. But understand me right. I do not build any doctrine on this or that person. This or any other  
man

man may be deceived, and I am not moved. But if there are none made perfect yet, God has not sent me to preach perfection.

Put a parallel case. For many years I have preached, "There is a peace of God which passeth all understanding." Convince me, that this word has fallen to the ground; that in all these years none have attained this peace; that there is no living witness of it at this day, and I will preach it no more.

"O, but several persons have died in that peace." Perhaps so: but I want *living* witnesses. I cannot indeed be infallibly certain, that this or that person is a witness. But if I were certain there are none such, I should have done with this doctrine.

"You misunderstand me. I believe some who died in this love, enjoyed it long before their death. But I was not certain, that their former testimony was true, till some hours before they died."

You had not an *infallible* certainty then. And a *reasonable* certainty you might have had before: such a certainty as might have quickened and comforted your own soul, and answered all other Christian purposes. Such a certainty as this any candid person may have, suppose there be any living witness, by talking one hour with that person in the love and fear of God.

2. But what does it signify, whether any have attained it or no, seeing so many scriptures witness for it?

A. If I were convinced, that none in *England* had attained what has been so clearly and strongly preached by such a number of preachers, in so many places, and for so long a time: I should be clearly convinced, that we had all mistaken the meaning of those scriptures. And therefore for the time to come, I too should teach, that "sin will remain till death."

I will here beg leave to add a few questions written by a plain man on this important subject.

"Queries, humbly proposed to those who deny perfection to be attainable in this life.

1. Has there not been a *larger measure* of the Holy Spirit given under the Gospel, than under the Jewish dispensation? If not, in what sense was *the Spirit* not given before Christ was glorified? *John* vii. 39.

2. Was that *glory which followed the sufferings of Christ*, *1 Pet.* i. 11. an external glory, or an internal, viz. the glory of holiness?

3. Has God any where in scripture commanded us more than he has *promised* to us?

4. Are the promises of God respecting holiness, to be fulfilled *in this life*, or only *in the next*?

5. Is a Christian under any other laws than those, which God promises to *write in our hearts*? *Jer.* xxxi. 31, &c. *Heb.* viii. 10.

6. In what sense is *the righteousness of the law* fulfilled in those, *who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*? *Rom.* viii. 4.

7. Is it impossible for any one in this life, to *love God with all his heart, and mind, and soul, and strength*? And is the Christian under any law which is not fulfilled in this love?

8. Does the soul's *going out of the body* effect its purification from indwelling sin?

9. If so, is it not something else, not the *blood of Christ, which cleanseth it from all sin*?

10. If his blood cleanseth us from all sin, while the soul and body are united, is it not *in this life*?

11. If when that union ceases; is it not *in the next*? And is not this too late?

12. If in the article of death; what situation is the soul in, when it is neither *in the body*, nor *out of it*?

13. Did not St. Paul pray according to the will of God, when he prayed that the *Thessalonians* might be *sanctified wholly, and preserved* (in this world, not the next, unless he was praying for the dead) *blameless in body, soul, and spirit, unto the coming of Jesus Christ*?

14. Do you sincerely *desire* to be freed from indwelling sin *in this life*?

15. If you do, did not God give you that desire?

16. If

16. If so, did he not give it you to mock you, since it is impossible it should ever be fulfilled?

17. If you have not sincerity enough even to desire it, are you not disputing about matters too high for you?

18. Do you ever pray God to *cleanse the thoughts of your heart, that you may perfectly love him?*

19. If you neither *desire* what you ask, nor *believe* it attainable, pray you not as a fool prayeth?

God help thee to consider these questions calmly and impartially!"

In the year 1763 the number of those who believed they were saved from sin, still increasing, I judged it needful to publish, chiefly for their use, "Farther Thoughts on Christian Perfection:" which I will also adjoin.

Q. 1. How is *Christ the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth?* Rom. x. 4.

A. In order to understand this, you must understand what law is here spoken of. And this I apprehend, is, 1. The Mosaic law, the whole Mosaic dispensation; which St. Paul continually speaks of as one, though containing three parts, the political, moral, and ceremonial: 2. The *Adamic* law, that given to Adam in innocence, properly called, "the law of works." This is in substance the same with the *Angelic* law, being common to angels and man. It required, that man should use to the glory of God, all the powers with which he was created. Now he was created free from any defect, either in his understanding or his affections. His body was then no clog to the mind: it did not hinder his apprehending all things clearly, judging truly concerning them, and reasoning justly; if he reasoned at all. I say, "If he reasoned:" for possibly he did not. Perhaps he had no need of reasoning, till his corruptible body pressed down the mind, and impaired its native faculties. Perhaps till then, the mind saw every truth that offered, as directly as the eye now sees the light.

Consequently

Consequently this law, proportioned to his original powers, required that he should always think, always speak, and always act precisely right, in every point whatever. He was well able so to do. And God could not but require the service he was able to pay.

But *Adam* fell: and his incorruptible body became corruptible: and ever since it is a clog to the soul, and hinders its operations. Hence at present no child of man can at all times apprehend clearly, or judge truly. And where either the judgment or apprehension is wrong, it is impossible to reason justly. Therefore it is as natural for a man to mistake, as to breathe; and he can no more live without the one than without the other. Consequently no man is able to perform the service, which the *Adamic* law requires.

And no man is obliged to perform it: God does not require it of any man. *For Christ is the end of the Adamic*, as well as the *Mosaic law*. By his death he hath put an end to both: he hath abolished both the one and the other, with regard to man; and the obligation to observe either the one or the other is vanished away. Nor is any man living bound to observe the *Adamic*, more than the *Mosaic law*.

In the room of this, *Christ* hath established another, namely, The law of faith. Not every one that doeth, but every one that believeth, now receiveth righteousness, in the full sense of the word, that is, he is justified, sanctified, and glorified.

Q. 2. Are we then *dead to the law*?

A. We are *dead to the law by the body of Christ* given for us; *Rom. vii. 4.* to the *Adamic*, as well as *Mosaic law*. We are wholly freed therefrom by his death: that law expiring with him.

Q. 3. How then are we *not without law to God*, but *under the law to Christ*? *1 Cor. ix. 21.*

A. We are without *that law*. But it does not follow that we are without any law. For God has established another law in its place, even the law of faith. And we are all under this law to God and to Christ. Both our Creator and our Redeemer require us to observe it.

Q. 4.

Q. 4. Is love the fulfilling of this law ?

A. Unquestionably it is. The whole law, under which we now are, is fulfilled by love, Rom. xiii. 9, 10. Faith working or animated by love, is all that God now requires of man. He has substituted (not sincerity, but) love, in the room of angelic perfection.

Q. 5. How is love the end of the commandment ? 1 Tim.

1. 5.

A. It is the end of every commandment of God. It is the point aimed at by the whole, and every part of the Christian institution. The foundation is faith, purifying the heart ; the end love, preserving a good conscience.

Q. 6. What love is this ?

A. The loving the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength ; and the loving our neighbour, every man as ourselves, as our own souls.

Q. 7. What are the fruits or properties of this love ?

A. St. Paul informs us at large, Love is long-suffering. It suffers all the weaknesses of the children of God, all the wickedness of the children of the world. And that not for a little time only ; but as long as God pleases. In all it sees the hand of God, and willingly submits thereto. Mean time it is kind. In all, and after all it suffers, it is soft, mild, tender, benign. Love envieth not : It excludes every kind and degree of envy out of the heart. Love acteth not rashly, in a violent, headstrong manner, nor passes any rash or severe judgment. It doth not behave itself indecently, is not rude, does not act out of character : seeketh not her own ease, pleasure, honour, or profit : is not provoked : expels all wrath from the heart : thinketh no evil : casteth out all jealousy, suspiciousness, and readiness to believe evil : rejoices not in iniquity, yea, weeps at the sin or folly of its bitterest enemies : but rejoiceth in the truth, in the holiness and happiness of every child of man. Love covereth all things : speaks evil of no man : believeth all things, that tend to the advantage of another's character. It hopeth all things, whatever may extenuate the faults which cannot be denied : and it endureth all things, which  
God

God can permit, or men and devils inflict. This is *the law of Christ, the perfect law, the law of liberty.*

And this distinction between the *law of faith* (or love) and *the law of works*, is neither a *subtle*, nor an unnecessary distinction. It is plain, easy, and intelligible to any common understanding. And it is absolutely necessary, to prevent a thousand doubts and fears, even in those who do *walk in love.*

Q. 8. But do we not in many things offend all, yea, the best of us, even against this law?

A. In one sense we do not, while all our tempers, and thoughts, and words, and works spring from love. But in another we do, and shall do, more or less, as long as we remain in the body. For neither love nor the *unction of the Holy One* makes us infallible. Therefore through unavoidable defect of understanding, we cannot but mistake in many things. And these mistakes will frequently occasion something wrong, both in our temper, and words, and actions. From mistaking his character, we may love a person less than he really deserves. And by the same mistake we are unavoidably led to speak or act with regard to that person, in such a manner as is contrary to this law, in some or other of the preceding instances.

Q. 9. Do we not then need Christ, even on this account?

A. The holiest of men still need Christ as their prophet, as *the light of the World.* For he does not give them light, but from moment to moment: the instant he withdraws, all is darkness. They still need Christ as their king. For God does not give them a stock of holiness. But unless they receive a supply every moment, nothing but unholiness would remain. They still need Christ as their priest, to make atonement for their holy things. Even perfect holiness is acceptable to God only through Jesus Christ.

Q. 10. May not then the very best of men adopt the dying martyr's confession, "I am in myself *nothing but sin, darkness, hell*: but thou art my light, my holiness, my heaven?"

A. Not

A. Not exactly. But the best of men may say, "Thou art my light, my holiness, my heaven. Through my union with thee, I am full of light, of holiness, and happiness. And if I were left to myself, I should be nothing but sin, darkness, hell."

But to proceed. The best of men need Christ as their priest, their atonement, their advocate with the Father: not only, as the continuance of their every blessing depends on his death and intercession, but on account of their coming short of the law of love. For every man living does so. You who *feel all love*, compare yourselves with the preceding description; weigh yourselves in this balance, and see if you are not wanting in many particulars.

Q. 11. But if all this be consistent with Christian Perfection, that perfection is not freedom from all sin: seeing *sin is the transgression of the law*. And the perfect transgress the very law they are under. Besides, they need the atonement of Christ. And he is the atonement for nothing but sin. Is then the term *sinless perfection* proper?

A. It is not worth disputing about. But observe, in what sense the persons in question need the atonement of Christ. They do not need him to reconcile them to God *afresh*: For they are reconciled. They do not need him, to *restore* the favour of God, but to *continue* it. He does not *procure* pardon for them *anew*, but *ever liveth to make intercession for them*. And by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified, Heb. x. 14.

For want of duly considering this, some deny, that they need the atonement of Christ. Indeed exceeding few: I do not remember to have found five of them in England. Of the two, I would sooner give up perfection. But we need not give up either one or the other. The Perfection I hold, *Love rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in every thing giving thanks*, is well consistent with it: if any hold a Perfection which is not, they must look to it.

Q. 12. Does then Christian Perfection imply any more than *sincerity*?

A. Not if you mean by that word, love filling the heart, expelling pride, anger, evil desire, self-will; rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in every thing giving thanks. But I doubt few use *sincerity* in this sense. Therefore I think the old word is best.

A person may be *sincere*, who has all his natural tempers, pride, anger, lust, self-will, in some degree. But he is not *perfect*, till his heart is cleansed from these, and all its other corruptions.

To clear this point a little farther; I know many that love God with all their heart. He is their one desire, their one delight, and they are continually happy in him. They love their neighbour as themselves. They feel as sincere, fervent, constant a desire for the happiness of every man, good or bad, friend or enemy, as for their own. They rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks. Their souls are continually streaming up to God, in holy joy, prayer, and praise. This is a point of fact. And this is plain, sound, scriptural experience.

But even these souls dwell in a shattered body, and are so prest down thereby, that they cannot always exert themselves as they would, by thinking, speaking, and acting *precisely right*. For want of better bodily organs, they must at times, think, speak, or act wrong; not indeed through a defect of *love*, but through a defect of *knowledge*. And while this is the case, notwithstanding that defect, and its consequences, they fulfil the law of love.

Yet as even in this case there is not a full conformity to the perfect law, so the most perfect do on this very account, need the blood of atonement, and may properly for themselves, as well as for their brethren say, *Forgive us our trespasses*.

Q. 13. But if Christ has put an end to that law, what need of any atonement for their transgressing it?

A. Observe in what sense he has *put an end* to it, and the difficulty vanishes. Were it not for the *abiding merit*

*merit* of his death, and his *continual intercession* for us, that law would condemn us still. These therefore we still need, for every transgression of it.

Q. 14. But can one that is saved from sin be tempted?

A. Yes; for *Christ was tempted*.

Q. 15. However, what you call temptation, I call the corruption of my heart. And how will you distinguish one from the other?

A. In some cases it is impossible to distinguish, without the *direct witness* of the spirit. But in general one may distinguish thus:

One commends me. Here is a temptation to pride; but instantly my soul is humbled before God. And I feel no pride: of which I am as sure as that pride is not humility.

A man strikes me. Here is a temptation to anger. But my heart overflows with love; and I feel no anger at all: of which I am as sure, as that love and anger are not the same.

A woman solicits me. Here is a temptation to lust. But in the instant I shrink back; and I feel no desire or lust at all: of which I can be as sure, as that my hand is cold or hot.

Thus it is, if I am tempted by a *present* object: and it is just the same, if when it is absent, the devil recalls a commendation, an injury, or a woman to my mind. In the instant the soul repels the temptation, and remains filled with pure love.

And the difference is still plainer, when I compare my present state with my past, wherein I felt temptation and corruption too.

Q. 16. But how do you *know*, that you are sanctified, saved from your inbred corruption?

A. I can know it no otherwise than I know that I am justified. *Hereby know we that we are of God*, in either sense, *by the Spirit that he hath given us*.

We know it by *the witness*, and by *the fruit* of the Spirit. And first, by *the witness*. As when we were justified, the *Spirit bore witness with our spirit*, that our

sins were forgiven ; so when we were sanctified, he bore witness, that they were taken away. Indeed the witness of sanctification is not always clear at first (as neither is that of justification ; ) neither is it afterwards always the same, but like that of justification, sometimes stronger and sometimes fainter. Yea, and sometimes it is withdrawn. Yet in general, the latter testimony of the Spirit is both as clear and as steady as the former.

Q. 17. But what need is there of it, seeing sanctification is a *real change*, not a *relative* only, like justification ?

A. But is the new-birth a *relative* change only ? Is not this a *real* change ? Therefore if we need no witness of our sanctification, because it is a *real* change, for the same reason, we should need none that we are born of, or are the children of God.

Q. 18. But does not sanctification shine by its own light ?

A. And does not the new birth too ? Sometimes it does. And so does sanctification : at others it does not. In the hour of temptation Satan clouds the work of God, and injects various doubts and reasonings, especially in those who have either very weak or very strong understandings. At such times there is absolute need of that witness : without which the work of sanctification, not only could not be discerned, but could no longer subsist. Were it not for this, the soul could not then abide in the love of God : much less could it rejoice evermore, and in every thing give thanks. In these circumstances therefore, a *direct testimony* that we are sanctified, is necessary in the highest degree.

“ But I have no *witness* that I am saved from sin ; and yet I have no doubt of it.” Very well. As long as you have no doubt, it is enough : when you have, you will need that *witness*.

Q. 19. But what scripture makes mention of any such thing, or gives any reason to expect it ?

A. That scripture, 1 Cor. ii. 12. *We have received not the spirit that is of the world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things which are freely given us of God.*  
Now

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Now surely sanctification is *one* of the things which are freely given us of God. And no good reason can be assigned, why it should be excepted, when the apostle says, *We receive the Spirit for this end, that we may know the things which are thus freely given us.*

Is not the same thing implied, that well known scripture, *Rom. viii. 16. The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God?* Does he only witness this to those who are children of God in the lowest sense? Nay, but to those also who are such in the highest sense. And does he not witness that they *are such in the highest sense?* What reason have we to doubt it?

What if a man were to affirm (as indeed many do) that this witness belongs *only to the highest* class of Christians? Would not you answer, the apostle makes no restriction. Therefore doubtless it belongs to all the children of God. And will not the same answer hold if any affirm, That it belongs *only to the lowest* class?

Consider likewise *1 John v. 19. We know that we are of God. How? By the Spirit that he hath given us.* *1 John iii. 24. Nay, hereby we know that he abideth in us.* And what ground have we either from scripture or reason, to exclude the witness any more than the fruit of the Spirit from being here intended? By this then also *we know that we are of God, and in what sense* we are so. Whether we are babes, young men, or fathers, we know in the same manner.

Not that I affirm, That all young men, or even fathers, have this testimony every moment: there may be intermissions of the direct testimony that they are thus born of God. But those intermissions are fewer and shorter, as they grow up in Christ. And some have the testimony both of their justification and sanctification, without any intermission at all: which I presume more might have, did they walk as humbly and closely with God as they may.

Q. 20. May not some of these have a testimony from the Spirit, that they shall not finally fall from God?

A. They

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A. They may. And this persuasion, that *neither life nor death shall separate them from Him*, far from being hurtful, may in some circumstances be extremely useful. Therefore we should in no wise grieve, but earnestly encourage them, *to hold the beginning of their confidence stedfast to the end.*

Q. 21. But have any a testimony from the Spirit that they shall never fall?

A. We know not what God may vouchsafe to some particular persons. But we do not find any general state described in scripture, from which a man cannot draw back to sin. If there were any state wherein this was impossible, it would be that of those who are *sanctified*, who are *Fathers in Christ*, who *rejoice evermore*, *pray without ceasing*, and *in every thing give thanks*. But it is not impossible for these to draw back. They who are *sanctified*, may yet fall and perish, *Heb. x. 29*. Even *Fathers in Christ*, need that warning, *Love not the world*, *1 John ii. 15*. They who *rejoice*, *pray*, and *give thanks without ceasing*, may nevertheless *quench the Spirit*. *1 Thes. v. 16*. &c. Nay, even they who are *sealed unto the day of redemption*, may yet *grieve the Holy Spirit of God*—*Eph. iv. 30*.

Although therefore God may give such a witness to some particular persons, yet it is not to be expected by Christians in general, there being no scripture whereon to ground such an expectation.

Q. 22. By what fruit of the Spirit may we know that we are of God, even in the highest sense?

A. By *love*, *joy*, *peace* always abiding; by *invariable long-suffering*, *patience*, *resignation*; by *gentleness*, *triumphing over all provocation*; by *goodness*, *mildness*, *sweetness*, *tenderness of spirit*; by *fidelity*, *simplicity*, *godly sincerity*; by *meekness*, *calmness*, *evenness of spirit*; by *temperance*, not only in food and sleep, but in all things natural and spiritual.

Q. 23. But what great matter is there in this? Have we not all this when we are justified?

A. What! *Total resignation to the will of God*, without any mixture of self-will? *Gentleness*, without any touch

touch of anger, even the moment we are provoked? *Love* to God, without the least love to the creature, but in and for God, excluding *all* pride? Love to man, excluding *all* envy, *all* jealousy, and rash judging? *Meekness*, keeping the whole soul inviolably calm? And *temperance* in all things? Deny that any ever came up to this, if you please: but do not say all who are justified, do.

Q. 24. But some who are newly justified do: what then will you say to these?

A. If they really do, I will say, they are sanctified, saved from sin in that moment; and that they never need lose what God has given, or feel sin any more.

But certainly this is an exempt case. It is otherwise with the generality of those that are justified. They feel in themselves, more or less, pride, anger, self-will, and an heart bent to backsliding. And till they have gradually mortified these, they are not fully renewed in love.

Q. 25. But is not this the case of all that are justified? Do they not *gradually* die to sin and grow in grace, till at, or perhaps a little before death, God perfects them in love?

A. I believe this is the case of most, but not all.—God usually gives a considerable *time*, for men to receive *light*, to grow in *grace*, to *do* and *suffer* his will, before they are either justified or sanctified. But he does not invariably adhere to this. Sometimes he *cuts short his work*. He does the work of many years in a few weeks: perhaps in a week, a day, an hour. He justifies, or sanctifies both those who have *done*, or *suffered* nothing, and who have not had *time* for a gradual growth either in *light* or *grace*. And may he not *do what he will with his own*? *Is thine eye evil, because he is good*?

It need not therefore be affirmed over and over, and proved by forty texts of scripture, either that most men are perfected in love *at last*, that there is a *gradual work* of God in the soul: or that, generally speaking, it is a *long time*, even many years, before sin is destroyed.

All this we know. But we know likewise, that God may, with man's good leave, *cut short his work*, in whatever degree he pleases, and do the usual work of many years in a moment. He does so in many instances. And yet there is a *gradual work*, both *before* and *after* that moment. So that one may affirm, the work is *gradual*; another, it is *instantaneous*, without any manner of contradiction.

Q. 26. Does St. Paul mean any more by being *sealed with the Spirit*, than being *renewed in love*?

A. Perhaps in one place, 2 Cor. i. 22. he does not mean so much. But in another, Eph. i. 13, he seems to include both the fruit and the witness; and that in a higher degree than we experience, even when we are first *renewed in love*. God sealed us with the Spirit of promise, by giving us the full assurance of hope; such a confidence of receiving all the promises of God, as excludes the possibility of doubting: with that Holy Spirit, by universal holiness stamping the whole image of God on our hearts.

Q. 27. But how can those who are thus sealed grieve the Holy Spirit of God?

A. St. Paul tells you very particularly, 1. By such conversation as is not profitable, not to the use of edifying, not apt to minister grace to the hearers; 2. By relapsing into bitterness or want of kindness; 3. By wrath, lasting displeasure, or want of tender-heartedness; 4. By anger, however soon it is over, want of instantly forgiving one another; 5. By clamour or bawling, loud, harsh, rough speaking; 6. By evil-speaking, whispering, tale-bearing; needlessly mentioning the fault of an absent person, though in ever so soft a manner.

Q. 28. What do you think of those in London, who seem to have been lately renewed in love?

A. There is something very peculiar in the experience of the greater part of them. One would expect, that a believer should first be filled with love, and thereby emptied of sin; whereas these were emptied of sin first, and then filled with love. Perhaps it pleased God to work in this manner, to make his work more plain.

plain and undeniable; and to distinguish it more clearly from that overflowing love, which is often felt even in a justified state.

It seems likewise most agreeable to the great promise, *Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26. From all your filthiness I will cleanse you: a new heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you.*

But I do not think of them all alike: there is a wide difference between some of them and others. I think most of them with whom I have spoken, have much faith, love, joy, and peace. Some of these I believe are renewed in love, and have the *direct witness* of it: And they manifest the fruit above described, in all their words and actions. Now let any man call this what he will. It is what I call *Perfection*.

But some who have much love, peace, and joy, yet have not the direct witness. And others who think they have, are nevertheless manifestly wanting in the fruit. How many I will not say: perhaps one in ten, perhaps more or fewer. But *some* are undeniably wanting in *long-suffering*, Christian resignation. They do not see the hand of God in whatever occurs, and cheerfully embrace it. They do not in every thing give thanks, and rejoice evermore. They are not happy: at least, not *always* happy. For sometimes they *complain*. They say, "This or that is *hard*!"

Some are wanting in *gentleness*. They *resist evil*, instead of turning the other cheek. They do not receive reproach with gentleness; no, nor even reproof. Nay, they are not able to bear contradiction, without the appearance, at least, of resentment. If they are reproved, or contradicted, though mildly, they do not take it well. They behave with more distance and reserve than they did before. If they are reproved or contradicted harshly, they answer it with harshness; with a loud voice, or with an angry tone, or in a sharp and surly manner. They speak sharply or roughly, when they reprove others, and behave roughly to their inferiors.

Some

Some are wanting in *goodness*. They are not kind, mild, sweet, amiable, soft, and loving at all times, in their spirit, in their words, in their look and air, in the whole tenor of their behaviour; and that to all, high and low, rich and poor, without respect of persons: particularly to them that are out of the way, to opposers, and to those of their own household. They do not long, study, endeavour by every means, to make all about them happy. They can see them uneasy, and not be concerned: perhaps they make them so. And then wipe their mouths and say, "Why, they deserve it. It is their own fault."

Some are wanting in *fidelity*, a nice regard to truth, simplicity, and godly sincerity. Their love is hardly *without dissimulation*; something like guile is found in their mouth. To avoid roughness, they lean to the other extreme. They are smooth to an excess, so as scarce to avoid a degree of fawning, or of seeming to mean what they do not.

Some are wanting in *meekness*, quietness of spirit, composure, evenness of temper. They are up and down, sometimes high, sometimes low; their mind is not well balanced. Their affections are either not in due proportion; they have too much of one, too little of another: or they are not duly mixed and tempered together, so as to counterpoise each other. Hence there is often a jar. Their soul is out of tune, and cannot make the true harmony.

Some are wanting in *temperance*. They do not steadily use that kind and degree of food, which they know, or might know, would most conduce to the health, strength, and vigour of the body. Or they are not temperate in sleep: they do not rigorously adhere to what is best both for body and mind. Otherwise they would constantly go to bed and rise early, and at a fixt hour. Or they sup late, which is neither good for body nor soul. Or they use neither fasting nor abstinence. Or they prefer (which are so many sorts of intemperance) that preaching, reading, or conversation, which gives them transient joy and comfort,

fort, before that which brings godly sorrow, or *instruction in righteousness*. Such joy is not sanctified. It doth not tend to and terminate in the crucifixion of the heart. Such faith doth not centre in God, but rather in itself.

So far all is plain. I believe you have faith, and love, and joy, and peace. You who are particularly concerned, know each for yourself, that you are wanting in the respect above mentioned. You are wanting either in long-suffering, gentleness, or goodness; either in fidelity, meekness, or temperance. Let us not then, on either hand, fight about words. In the thing we clearly agree.

You have not what I call perfection. If others will call it so, they may. However, hold fast what you have, and earnestly pray for what you have not.

Q. 29. Can those who are perfect, grow in grace?

A. Undoubtedly they can. And that not only while they are in the body, but to all eternity.

Q. 30. Can they fall from it?

A. I am well assured they can. Matter of fact puts this beyond dispute. Formerly we thought, one saved from sin, could not fall. Now, we know the contrary. Neither does any one stand, by virtue of any thing that is implied in the *nature* of the state. There is no such *height* or *strength* of holiness, as it is impossible to fall from. If there be any that *cannot fall*, this wholly depends on the promise and faithfulness of God.

Q. 31. Can those who fall from this state, recover it?

A. Why not? We have instances of this also. Nay, it is an exceeding common thing, for persons to lose it more than once, before they are established therein.

It is therefore to guard them who are saved from sin, from every occasion of stumbling, that I give the following advices.

Q. 32. What is the first advice that you would give them?

A. Watch

*A.* Watch and pray continually against pride. If God has cast it out, see that it enter no more : it is full as dangerous as evil desire ; and you may slide back into it unawares : especially if you think there is no danger of it. “ Nay, but I ascribe all I have to God.” So you may, and be proud nevertheless. For it is pride, not only to ascribe any thing we have to ourselves, but to think we have what we really have not. Mr. L—, for instance, ascribed all the light he had to God, and so far he was humble. But then he thought he had more light than any man living. And this was pride. So you ascribe all the knowledge you have to God ; and in this respect you are humble. But if you think you have more than you really have : or if you think you are so taught of God, as no longer to need man’s teaching, pride lieth at the door.

Do not therefore say to any who would advise or reprove you, “ You are blind : you cannot teach me.” Do not say, This is your *wisdom*, your *carnal reason* : but calmly weigh the thing before God.

Always remember, much grace does not imply much light. These do not always go together. As there may be much light where there is little love, so there may be much love where there is little light. The heart has more heat than the *eye* ; yet it cannot see. And God has wisely tempered the members of the body together, that none may say to another, “ I have no need of thee.”

To imagine none can teach you, but those who are themselves saved from sin, is a very great and dangerous mistake. Give not place to it for a moment. It would lead you into a thousand other mistakes, and that irrecoverably. No : *Dominion* is not *founded in grace*, as the madmen of the last age talked. Obey and regard *them that are over you in the Lord*, and do not think you know better than they. Know their place and *your own* : always remembering, Much love does not imply much light.

The not observing this has led some into many mistakes, and into the appearance, at least, of pride. O  
beware.

beware of the appearance and the thing. Let there *be* in you that lowly mind which was in Christ Jesus. And be ye likewise clothed with humility. Let it not only fill, but cover you all over. Let modesty and self-diffidence appear in all your words and actions. Let all you speak and do, shew that you are little, and base, and mean, and vile in your own eyes.

As one instance of this, be always ready to own any fault you have been in. If you have at any time thought, spoke, or acted wrong, be not backward to acknowledge it. Never dream that this will hurt the cause of God : no, it will further it. Be therefore open and frank when you are taxed with any thing : do not seek either to evade or disguise it. But let it appear just as it is, and you will thereby not hinder, but adorn the gospel.

Q. 33. What is the second advice which you would give them ?

A. Beware of that daughter of pride *enthusiasm* ! O keep at the utmost distance from it : give no place to an heated imagination. Do not hastily ascribe things to God. Do not easily suppose dreams, voices, impressions, visions, or revelations to be from God. They may be from him : they may be from nature : they may be from the devil. Therefore *believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God*. Try all things by the written word, and let all bow down before it. You are in danger of enthusiasm every hour, if you depart ever so little from scripture : yea, or from the plain, literal meaning of any text, taken in connection with the context. And so you are, if you despise or lightly esteem reason, knowledge, or human learning : every one of which is an excellent gift of God, and may serve the noblest purposes.

I advise you, never to use the words, *wisdom, reason, or knowledge*, by way of reproach. On the contrary, pray that you yourself may abound in them more and more. If you mean *worldly wisdom, useless knowledge, false reasoning*, say so : and throw away the chaff, but not the wheat.

One general inlet to enthusiasm is, expecting the end without the means; the expecting knowledge, for instance, without searching the scripture, and consulting the children of God: the expecting spiritual strength without constant prayer, and steady watchfulness: the expecting any blessing without hearing the word of God at every opportunity.

Some have been ignorant of this device of Satan. They have left off searching the scriptures. They said, "God writes all the scripture on my heart; therefore I have no need to read it." Others thought they had not so much need of hearing, and so grew slack in attending the morning-preaching. O take warning, you who are concerned herein. You have listened to the voice of a stranger. Fly back to Christ, and keep in the good old way, which was *once delivered to the saints*: the way that even an Heathen bore testimony of, "That the Christians rose early every day to sing hymns to Christ as God."

The very desire of *growing in grace*, may sometimes be an inlet of enthusiasm. As it continually leads us to seek *new grace*, it may lead us unawares, to seek something else new, beside *new degrees* of love to God and man. So it has led some to seek and fancy they had received gifts of a *new kind*, after a new heart, as,  
 1. The loving God with all our mind; 2. with all our soul; 3. with all our strength; 4. oneness with God; 5. oneness with Christ; 6. having our life hid with Christ in God; 7. being dead with Christ; 8. rising with him; 9. the sitting with him in heavenly places; 10. the being taken up into his throne; 11. the being in the new Jerusalem; 12. the seeing the tabernacle of God come down among men; 13. the being dead to all works; 14. the not being liable to death, pain, or grief, or temptation.

One ground of many of these mistakes is, the taking every fresh, strong application of any of these scriptures to the heart, to be a gift of a *new kind*: not knowing that several of these scriptures are not fulfilled yet; that most of the others are fulfilled when

when we are justified; the rest, the moment we are sanctified. It remains only, to experience them in *higher degrees*: this is all we have to expect.

Another ground of these, and a thousand mistakes is, the not considering deeply, that love is the highest gift of God, humble, gentle, patient love: that all visions, revelations, manifestations whatever, are little things compared to love; and that all the gifts above mentioned are the same with, or infinitely inferior to it.

It were well you should be thoroughly sensible of this: The heaven of heavens is love. There is nothing higher in religion: there is, in effect, nothing else: if you look for any thing but *more love*, you are looking wide of the mark, you are getting out of the royal way. And when you are asking others, have *you* received this or that blessing? If you mean any thing but *more love*, you mean wrong; you are leading them out of the way, and putting them upon a false scent. Settle it then in your heart, that from the moment God has saved you from all sin, you are to aim at nothing more, but more of that love described in the thirteenth of the *Corinthians*. You can go no higher than this, till you are carried into *Abraham's* bosom.

I say yet again, beware of *enthusiasm*. Such is, the imagining you have the gift of *prophecy*, or of *discerning of spirits*, which I do not believe one of you has; no, nor ever had yet. Beware of judging people to be either right or wrong, by your own *feelings*. This is no scriptural way of judging. O keep close to *the law, and to the testimony*!

Q. 34. What is the third?

A. Beware of *Antinomianism*, making void the law, or any part of it, *through faith*. Enthusiasm naturally leads to this; indeed they can scarce be separated.—This may steal upon you in a thousand forms, so that you cannot be too watchful against it. Take heed of every thing, whether in principle or practice, which has any tendency thereto. Even that great truth, that

Christ is the end of the law, may betray us into it, if we do not consider that he has adopted every point of the moral law, and grafted it into the law of love. Beware of thinking, "because I am filled with love, I need not have *so much* holiness: because I pray always, therefore I need no *set time* for private prayer: because I watch always, therefore I need no particular self-examination." Let us *magnify the law*, the whole written word, and make it honourable. Let this be our voice, *I prize thy commandments above gold or precious stones.—O what love have I unto thy law. All the day long is my study in it!* Beware of *Antinomian books*. They contain many excellent things; and this makes them the more dangerous. O be warned in time! Do not play with fire; do not put your hand on the hole of a cockatrice-den! I intreat you, beware of *bigotry*. Let not your love or beneficence be confined to *Methodists* (so called) only; much less to that very small part of them, who seem to be renewed in love: or to those who believe yours and their report: O make not this your *Shibboleth*. Beware of *stillness: ceasing*, in a wrong sense, from your own works. To mention one instance out of many: "You have received, says one, a great blessing; but you began to *talk* of it, and to *do* this and that; so you lost it. You should have been *still*."

Beware of *self-indulgence*: yea, and making a virtue of it, laughing at *self-denial* and *taking up the cross daily*, at fasting or abstinence. Beware of *censoriousness*: thinking or calling them that any ways oppose you, whether in judgment or practice, *blind, dead, fallen*, or "enemies to the work." Once more, beware of *Solifidianism*: crying nothing but "believe, believe:" and condemning those as *ignorant* or *legal*, who speak in a more scriptural way. At certain seasons indeed, it may be right to treat of nothing but repentance, or merely of faith, or altogether of holiness: but in general our call is, to declare the whole counsel of God, and to prophesy according to the analogy of faith. The written word treats of the whole, and every particular branch of righteousness, descending to its minutest branches, as to be sober,

sober, courteous, diligent, patient, to honour all men. So likewise the Holy Spirit works the same in our hearts, not merely creating desires after holiness in general, but strongly inclining us to every particular grace, leading us to every individual part of *whatsoever is lovely*. And this with the greatest propriety ; for as *by works faith is made perfect*, so the compleating or destroying the work of faith, and enjoying the favour, or suffering the displeasure of God, greatly depends on every single act of obedience or disobedience.

Q. 35. What is the fourth ?

A. Beware of *sins of omission* : lose no opportunity of doing good in any kind. Be zealous of good works. Willingly omit no work, either of piety or mercy. Do all the good you possibly can to the bodies and souls of men ; particularly, *thou shalt in any wise reprove thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him*. Be active. Give no place to indolence or sloth : give no occasion to say, " Ye are idle, ye are idle." Many will say so still ; but let your whole spirit and behaviour refute the slander. Be always employed ; lose no shred of time : gather up the fragments, that none be lost ; and whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might. Be *slow to speak*, and wary in speaking. *In a multitude of words there wanteth not sin*. Do not talk much ; neither long at a time. Few can converse profitably above an hour. Keep at the utmost distance from pious chit-chat, from religious gossiping.

Q. 36. What is the fifth ?

A. Beware of *desiring* any thing but God. Now you desire nothing else. Every other desire is driven out : see that none enter again. *Keep thyself pure, let your eye remain single, and your whole body shall be full of light*. Admit no desire of pleasing food, or any other pleasure of sense : no desire of pleasing the eye, or the imagination, by any thing grand, or new, or beautiful : no desire of money, of praise, or esteem ; of happiness in any creature. You may bring these desires back ; but you need not ; you need feel them no more. O stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free.

Be

Be patterns to all, of denying yourselves, and taking up your cross daily. Let them see that you make no account of any pleasure, which does not bring you nearer to God; nor regard any pain which does: that you simply aim at pleasing him, whether by doing or suffering: that the constant language of your heart, with regard to pleasure or pain, honour or dishonour, riches or poverty, is,

All's alike to me, so I

In my Lord may live and die!

Q. 37. What is the sixth?

A. Beware of *schism*; of making a rent in the church of Christ. That inward disunion, the members ceasing to have reciprocal love *one for another* (1 Cor. xii. 25) is the very root of all contention, and every outward separation. Beware of every thing tending thereto. Beware of a dividing spirit: shun whatever has the least aspect that way. Therefore say not, *I am of Paul, or of Apollos*; the very thing which occasioned the schism at *Corinth*. Say not, this is *my* preacher; the *best* preacher in *England*; give me him, and take all the rest. All this tends to breed or foment division, to disunite those whom God hath joined. Do not run down any preacher. Do not exalt any one above the rest, lest you hurt both him and the cause of God. On the other hand, do not bear hard upon any by reason of some incoherency or inaccuracy of expression; no, nor for some mistakes, were they really such.

Likewise if you would avoid schism, observe every *rule* of the *society*, and of the *bands*, for conscience' sake. Never omit meeting your class or band; never absent yourself from any public meeting: these are the very sinews of our society; and whatever weakens, or tends to weaken our regard for these, or our exactness in attending them, strikes at the very root of our community. As one saith, "That part of our economy, the private weekly meetings for prayer, examination, and particular exhortation, has been the greatest means of deepening and confirming every blessing, that was received by the word preached, and of diffusing it to others,

others, who could not attend the public ministry—whereas, without this religious connection and intercourse, the most ardent attempts by mere preaching, have proved of no lasting use.”

Suffer not one thought of separating from your brethren, whether their opinions agree with yours or not. Do not dream that any man sins, in not believing *you*, in not taking *your word*; or that this or that *opinion* is essential to the work, and both must stand or fall together. Beware of *impatience of contradiction*. Do not condemn or think hardly of those who cannot see just as you see, or who judge it their duty to contradict you, whether in a great thing or a small. I fear some of us have thought hardly of others, merely because they contradicted what we affirmed. All this tends to division; and by every thing of this kind, we are teaching them an evil lesson against ourselves.

O beware of touchiness, of testiness, not bearing to be spoken to; starting at the least word; and flying from those who do not implicitly receive mine or another's sayings!

Expect contradiction and opposition, together with crosses of various kinds. Consider the words of St. Paul, *To you it is given in the behalf of Christ, for his sake, as a fruit of his death and intercession for you, not only to believe, but also to suffer for his sake*, Phil. i. 29. *It is given!* God gives you this opposition or reproach: it is a fresh token of his love. And will you disown the giver? Or spurn his gift, and count it a misfortune? Will you not rather say, “Father, the hour is come, that thou shouldest be glorified. Now thou givest thy child, to suffer something for thee. Do with me according to thy will.” Know that these things, far from being hindrances to the work of God, or to your soul, unless by your own fault, are not only unavoidable in the course of Providence, but profitable, yea, necessary for you. Therefore receive them from God (not from chance) with willingness, with thankfulness. Receive them from men with humility, meekness, yieldingness, gentleness, sweetness. Why should not even your out-

ward *appearance* and *manner*, be soft? Remember the character of *Lady Cutts*: "It was said of the Roman Emperor, *Titus*, 'never any one *came displeased from him*;' but, it might be said of her, never any one *went displeased to her*. So secure were all, of the kind and favourable reception, which they would meet with from her."

Beware of tempting others to separate from *you*. Give no offence which can possibly be avoided: see that your practice be in all things suitable to your profession, adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour. Be particularly careful in speaking of yourself: you may not indeed deny the work of God; but speak of it, when you are called thereto, in the most inoffensive manner possible. Avoid all magnificent, pompous words. Indeed you need give it no *general* name: Neither "perfection, sanctification, the second blessing, nor the having attained." Rather speak of the *particulars*, which God has wrought for you. You may say, "At such a time I felt a change which I am not able to express. And since that time I have not felt pride, or self-will, or wrath, or unbelief: nor any thing but a fulness of love to God and to all mankind." And answer any other plain question that is asked, with modesty and simplicity.

And if any of you should at any time fall from what you now are, if you should again feel pride or unbelief, or any temper from which you are now delivered: do not deny, do not hide, do not disguise it at all, at the peril of your soul. At all events go to one in whom you can confide, and speak just what you feel. God will enable him to speak a word in season, which shall be health to your soul. And surely the Lord will again lift up your head, and cause the bones that have been broken to rejoice.

Q. 38. What is the last advice that you would give them?

A. Be *exemplary* in all things: particularly in *outward* things (as in *dress*;) in *little* things, in the laying out of your *money* (avoiding every needless expence;) in

in deep, steady *seriousness*, and in the *solidity* and *usefulness* of all your *conversation*. So shall you be *light-shining in a dark place*: So shall you daily grow in *grace*, till an *entrance* be ministered unto you abundantly, into the *everlasting kingdom* of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Most of the preceding advices are strongly enforced in the following reflections: which I recommend to your deep and frequent consideration, next to the holy scriptures.

1. The sea is an excellent figure of the fulness of God and that of the blessed Spirit. For as the rivers all return into the sea; so the bodies, the souls, and the good works of the righteous, return into God, to live there in his eternal repose.

Although all the graces of God depend on his mere bounty, yet is he pleased generally to attach them to the prayers, the instructions, and the holiness of those with whom we are. By strong though invisible attractions, he draws some souls through their intercourse with others.

The sympathies formed by grace far surpass those formed by nature.

The truly devout shew that passions as naturally flow from true as from false Love, so deeply sensible are they of the goods and evils of those whom they love for God's sake. But this can only be comprehended by those who understand the language of love.

The bottom of the soul may be in repose, even while we are in many outward troubles; just as the bottom of the sea is calm, while the surface is strongly agitated.

2. The *best helps to growth in grace*, are the ill usage, the affronts, and the losses which befall us. We should receive them with all thankfulness, as preferable to all others, were it only on this account, that our will has no part therein.

The readiest way to escape from our sufferings is, to be willing they should endure as long as God pleases.

If

If we suffer persecution and affliction in a right manner, we attain a larger measure of conformity to Christ by a due improvement of one of these occasions, than we could have done merely by imitating his mercy, in abundance of good works.

One of the greatest evidences of God's love to those that love him, is to send them afflictions with grace to bear them.

Even in great afflictions, we ought to testify to God, that in receiving them from his hand, we feel pleasure in the midst of the pain, from being afflicted by him who loves us, and whom we love.

The readiest way which God takes to draw a man to himself, is to afflict him in that he loves most and with good reason: and to cause this affliction to arise from some good action done with a single eye: because nothing can more clearly shew him the emptiness of what is most lovely and desirable in the world.

3. True *resignation* consists in a thorough conformity to the whole will of God; who wills and does all (excepting sin) which comes to pass in the world. In order to this we have only to embrace all events, good and bad, as his will.

In the greatest afflictions which can befall the just, either from heaven or earth, they remain immovable in peace, and perfectly submissive to God, by an inward, loving regard to him, uniting in one all the powers of their souls.

We ought quietly to suffer whatever befalls us, to bear the defects of others and our own, to confess them to God in secret prayer, or with groans which cannot be uttered: but never to speak a sharp or peevish word, nor to murmur or repine.

Be thoroughly willing, that God should treat you in the manner that pleases him. We are his lambs, and therefore ought to be ready to suffer, even to the death, without complaining.

We are to bear with those we cannot amend, and to be content with offering them to God. This is true resignation.

resignation. And since he has borne our infirmities, we may well bear those of each other for his sake.

To abandon all, to strip one's self of all, in order to seek and to follow Jesus Christ, naked to *Bethlehem*, where he was born; naked to the hall, where he was scourged; and naked to *Calvary*, where he died on the cross, is so great a mercy, that neither the thing, nor the knowledge of it is given to any, but through faith in the Son of God.

4. There is no love of God without patience, and no patience without *lowliness* and sweetness of spirit.

*Humility* and patience are the surest proof of the increase of love.

Humility alone unites patience with love, without which it is impossible to draw profit from suffering; or indeed to avoid complaint, especially when we think we have given no occasion for what men make us suffer.

True humility is a kind of self-annihilation: and this is the centre of all virtues.

A soul returned to God, ought to be attentive to every thing which is said to him, on the head of salvation, with a desire to profit thereby.

5. The bearing with men, and suffering evils in *meekness* and silence, is a grand part of a Christian life.

God is the first object of our love: its next office is, to bear the defects of others. And we should begin the practice of this amidst our own household.

We should particularly exercise our love towards them who most shock either our way of thinking, or our temper, or our knowledge, or the desire we have that others should be as virtuous as we wish to be ourselves.

6. On every occasion of uneasiness, we should retire to prayer, that we may give place to the grace and light of God, and then form our resolutions, without being in any pain about what success they may have.

In the greatest temptations, a single look to Christ, and the barely pronouncing his name, suffices to overcome

come the wicked one, so it be done with confidence and calmness of spirit.

God's command to *pray without ceasing*, is founded on the necessity we have of his grace, to preserve the life of God in the soul, which can no more subsist one moment without it, than the body can without air.

Prayer continues in the desire of the heart, though the understanding be employed on outward things.

In souls filled with love, the desire to please God is a continual prayer.

As the furious hate which the devil bears us, is termed the roaring of the lion, so our vehement love may be termed, crying after God.

7. It is scarce conceivable how *straight the way* is, wherein God leads them that follow him; and how dependent on him we must be, unless we are wanting in our faithfulness to him.

It is hardly credible of how great consequence before God, the smallest things are; and what great inconveniencies sometimes follow those which appear to be light faults.

As a very little dust will disorder a clock, and the least sand will obscure our sight, so the least grain of sin, which is upon the heart, will hinder its right motion towards God.

We ought to be in the church as the saints are in heaven, and in the house as the holiest men are in the church: doing our work in the house as we pray in the church, worshipping God from the ground of the heart.

We should be continually labouring to cut off all the useless things that surround us. And God usually retrenches the superfluities of our souls, in the same proportion as we do those of our bodies.

The best means of resisting the devil is, to destroy whatever of the world remains in us; in order to raise for God upon its ruins, a building all of love. Then shall we begin in this fleeting life, to love God as we shall love him in eternity.

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We scarce conceive how easy it is to rob God of his due, in our friendship with the most virtuous persons, until they are torn from us by death. But if this loss produce lasting sorrow, that is a clear proof that we had before two treasures, between which we divided our heart.

8. If after having renounced all, we do not *watch* incessantly, and beseech God to accompany our vigilance with his, we shall be again entangled and overcome.

As the most dangerous winds may enter at little openings, so the devil never enters more dangerously, than by little, unobserved incidents, which seem to be nothing, yet insensibly open the heart to great temptations.

It is good to *examine closely* the state of our souls, as if we had never done it before. For nothing tends more to the full assurance of faith, than to keep ourselves by this means in humility, and the exercise of all good works.

To continual watchfulness and prayer, ought to be added continual employment. For grace flies a vacuum as well as nature, and the devil fills whatever God does not fill.

There is no faithfulness like that which ought to be between a guide of souls, and the person directed by him. They ought continually to regard each other in God, and closely to examine themselves, whether all their thoughts are pure, and all their words directed with Christian discretion. Other affairs are only the things of men, but these are peculiarly the things of God.

9. The words of St. Paul, *No man can call Jesus, Lord, but by the Holy Ghost*, shew us the necessity of eyeing God in our *good works*, and even in our minutest thoughts, knowing that none are pleasing to him but those which he forms in us and with us. From hence we learn that we cannot serve him, unless he use our tongue, hands, and heart, to do by his Spirit whatever he would have us do.

If

If we were not utterly impotent, our good works would be our own property: whereas now they belong wholly to God, because they proceed from him and his grace; while raising our works, and making them all divine, he honours himself in us through them.

One of the principal rules of religion is, To lose no occasion of serving God. And since he is invisible to our eyes, we are to serve him in our neighbour; which he receives as if done to himself in person, standing visibly before us.

God does not love men that are inconstant. Nothing is pleasing to him but what has a resemblance of his own immutability.

A constant attention to the work which God intrusts us with, is a mark of solid piety.

Love fasts when it can, and as much as it can, consistently with health. It leads to all the ordinances of God, and employs itself in all the outward works, whereof it is capable. It flies as it were, like *Elijah*, over the plain, to find God upon his holy mountain.

God is so great, that he communicates greatness to the least thing that is done for his service.

Happy are they who are sick; yea, or lose their life for having done a good work.

God frequently conceals the part which his children have in the conversion of other souls. Yet one may boldly say, that person who long groans before him for the conversion of another, whenever that soul is converted to God, is one of the chief causes of it.

Charity cannot be practised right, unless, first, we exercise it the moment God gives the occasion; and, secondly, to retire the instant after, to offer it to God by humble thanksgiving. And this for three reasons; 1st. To render to him what we have received from him; 2dly. To avoid the dangerous temptation which springs from the very goodness of these works; and, 3dly. To unite ourselves to God, in whom the soul expands itself in prayer, with all the graces we have received, and the good works we have done, to draw from

from him new strength against the bad effects which these very works may produce in us, if we do not make use of the antidotes which God has ordained against them. The true means to be filled anew with the riches of grace, is thus to strip ourselves of it: and without this, it is extremely difficult not to grow faint in the practice of good works.

Good works do not receive their last perfection till they, as it were, lose themselves in God. This is a kind of death to them, resembling that of our bodies, which will not attain their highest life, their immortality, till they lose themselves in the glory of our souls, or rather of God, wherewith they shall be filled. And it is only what they had of earthly and mortal, which good works lose by this spiritual death.

Fire is the symbol of love; and the love of God is the principle, and the end of all our good works: but as truth surpasses figure, the fire of divine love has this advantage over material fire, that it can re-ascend to its source, and raise thither with it all the good works which it produces; and by this means it prevents their being corrupted by pride, vanity, or any evil mixture. But this cannot be done otherwise than by making these good works in a spiritual manner die in God, by a deep gratitude, which plunges the soul in him as in an abyss, with all that it is, and all the grace and works for which it is indebted to him: a gratitude, whereby the soul seems to empty itself of them, that they may return to their source, as rivers seem willing to empty themselves, when they pour themselves with all their waters into the sea.

When we have received any favour from God, we ought to retire, if not into our closets, into our hearts, and say, "I come, Lord, to restore to thee what thou hast given, and I freely relinquish it, to enter again into my own nothingness. For what is the most perfect creature in heaven or earth in thy presence, but a void capable of being filled with thee and by thee, as the air which is void and dark, is capable of being filled with the light of the sun? Grant

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therefore,

therefore, O Lord, that I may never appropriate thy grace to myself, any more than the air appropriates to itself the light of the sun, which withdraws it every day to restore it the next, there being nothing in the air that either appropriates its light, or resists it. O give me the same facility of receiving and restoring thy grace and good works! I say, thine: for I acknowledge the root from which they spring, is in thee, and not in me."

In the year 1764, upon a review of the whole subject, I wrote down the sum of what I had observed in the following short propositions:

" 1. There is such a thing as *perfection*; for it is again and again mentioned in scripture.

2. It is not so early as justification; for justified persons are to *go on to perfection*. Heb. vi. 1.

3. It is not so late as death; for St. Paul speaks of living men that were perfect. Phil. iii. 15.

4. It is not *absolute*. Absolute perfection belongs not to man, nor to angels; but to God alone.

5. It does not make a man *infallible*: none is infallible while he remains in the body.

6. Is it *sinless*? It is not worth while to contend for a term. It is *salvation from sin*.

7. It is *perfect love*; 1 John iv. 18. This is the *essence* of it: its *properties*, or inseparable fruits, are *rejoicing evermore, praying without ceasing, and in every thing giving thanks*. 1 Thes. v. 16, &c.

8. It is *improveable*. It is so far from lying in an indivisible point, from being incapable of increase, that one perfected in love, may grow in grace far swifter than he did before.

9. It is *amissible*, capable of being lost; of which we have had instances. But we were not thoroughly convinced of this till five or six years ago.

10. It is constantly both preceded and followed by a *gradual work*.

11. But is it in itself instantaneous, or not? In examining this, let us go on step by step.

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An *instantaneous change* has been wrought in some believers : none can deny this.

Since that change, they enjoy *perfect love*. They feel this, and this alone : they rejoice evermore, pray without ceasing, and in every thing give thanks. Now this is all that I mean by perfection ; therefore these are witnesses of the perfection which I preach.

“ But in some this change was not instantaneous ;” they did not perceive the instant when it was wrought. It is often difficult to perceive the instant when a man dies ; yet there is an instant in which life ceases : and if ever sin ceases, there must be a last moment of its existence, and a first moment of our deliverance from it.

“ But if they have this love now, they will lose it.” They may ; but they need not. And whether they do or no, they have it now ; they now experience what we teach ; they now are *all love* ; they *now* rejoice, pray, and praise without ceasing.

“ However, sin is only *suspended* in them ; it is not *destroyed*.” Call it which you please. They are *all love* to-day ; and they take no thought for the morrow.

“ But this doctrine has been much abused.” So has that of justification by faith. - But that is no reason for giving up either this or any other scriptural doctrine. When you wash your child, as one speaks, ‘ throw away the water, but do not throw away the child.’

“ But those who think they are saved from sin, say they have no need of the merits of Christ.” They say just the contrary. Their language is,

Every moment, Lord, I want  
The merit of thy death !

They never before had so deep, so unspeakable a conviction of the need of Christ in all his offices, as they have now.

Therefore all our preachers should make a point of *preaching perfection* to believers, constantly, strongly, and explicitly.

And all believers should *mind this one thing*, and continually agonize for it. And

I have now done what I proposed. I have given a plain and simple account of the doctrine of perfection. I have declared the whole, and every part of what I mean by that scriptural expression. I have drawn the picture of it at full length, without either disguise or covering. And remember, this is the doctrine of Jesus-Christ. Those are his words, not mine : Εσεσθε ἕν ὑμεῖς τέλειοι, ὡςπερ ὁ πατήρ ὑμῶν ὁ ἐν τοῖς ἑρανοῖς τέλειος ἐστι. *Ye shall therefore be perfect, as your Father who is in heaven is perfect.* And who says ye shall not? Or at least, not till your soul is separated from the body? It is the doctrine of St. Paul, the doctrine of St. James, of St. Peter, and St. John. It is the doctrine of every one who preaches the pure and the whole gospel. Look at it again; survey it on every side, and that with the closest attention: in one view, it is purity of intention, dedicating all the life to God. It is the giving God all our heart; it is one desire and design ruling all our tempers. It is the devoting, not a part, but all our soul, body, and substance to God. In another view, it is all the mind which was in Christ, enabling us to walk as Christ walked. It is the circumcision of the heart from all filthiness, all inward as well as outward pollution. It is a renewal of the heart in the whole image of God, the full likeness of him that created it. In yet another, it is the loving God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves.

Now, let this *perfection* appear in its native form, and who can speak one word against it? Will any dare to speak against loving the Lord our God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves? Against a renewal of heart, not only in part, but in the whole image of God? Who is he that will open his mouth against being cleansed from all pollution, both of flesh and spirit? Or against having all the mind that was in Christ, and walking in all things as Christ walked? What man, who calls himself a Christian, has the hardness to object, to the devoting, not a part, but all our soul, body, and substance to God? What serious  
man

man would oppose the giving God all our heart, and the having one desire ruling all our tempers? I say again, let this perfection appear in its own shape, and who will fight against it? It must be *disguised*, before it can be *opposed*. It must be *covered* with a bear-skin first, or even the wild-beasts of the people will scarce be induced to *worry* it. But whatever these do, let not the children of God any longer fight against the image of God. Let not the members of Christ say any thing against having the whole mind that was in Christ. Let not those who are alive to God, oppose the dedicating all our life to him. Why should *you*, who have his love shed abroad in your heart, withstand the giving him all your heart? Does not all that is within you cry out, "O who that loves, can love enough?" What pity that those who desire and design to please him, should have any other design or desire! Much more that they should dread, as a fatal delusion, yea, abhor, as an abomination to God, the having this one desire and design, ruling every temper! Why should *devout* men be afraid of devoting all their soul, body, and substance to God? Why should those who love Christ, count it a damnable error, to think we may have all the mind that was in him? We allow, we contend, that we are *justified freely*, through the righteousness and the blood of Christ. And why are you so hot against us, because we expect likewise, to be *sanctified wholly* through his Spirit? We look for no favour either from the open servants of sin, or from those who have only the form of religion. But how long will you, who worship God in spirit, who are *circumcised with the circumcision not made with hands*, set your battle in array against those, who seek an entire *circumcision of heart*, who thirst to be cleansed from all *filthiness of flesh and spirit*, and to *perfect holiness in the fear of God*? Are we your enemies, because we look for a full deliverance from that *carnal mind, which is enmity against God*? Nay, we are your brethren, your fellow-labourers in the vineyard of our Lord, your companions in the kingdom and patience of Jesus.

Although this we confess (if we are fools therein, yet as fools bear with us :) we do expect to love God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves. Yea, we do believe, that he will in this world so “ cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit, that we shall perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name.”

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## S E C T I O N XL.

### *Of Baptism.*

An Extract on the Nature and Subjects of Christian Baptism.

*Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. Go ye therefore and teach (or disciple) all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

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## THE FIRST PART.

### *On the NATURE of CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.*

**T**HE subject of our present inquiry may be reduced to these two points, viz. What is Christian Baptism? And, Who are the proper subjects of it? These I shall endeavour to resolve by the light of divine revelation.—And, as I claim no dominion over the faith of any, so I would speak as unto wise men: judge ye what I say.

The first thing to be considered, is, “ What is Christian Baptism?”

In our text, Christ commissions his ministers to baptize the nations. We borrow the word Baptism from the Greeks; among whom it was commonly used to signify a wetting or washing in some mode, as I shall shew more particularly in the sequel. Among Christians, Baptism is that Religious and Sacramental washing with Water, which Christ has appointed as the token and sign of our admission into the visible church, and of our having an interest in the privileges, and coming under the obligations of the gospel covenant.

But there are some, who are not content to enjoy all the liberty in our churches that they can reasonably desire for themselves. With them there is no true baptism without dipping: nor will they have Christian communion with any but those who have gone into the water. According to them, there are no gospel churches in the world, except of those who have been dipped. None are regularly called or sent of God to preach the word, and administer gospel ordinances, till they have been dipped. None may presume to come, or be admitted to the table of the Lord, till they have been dipped. And thus, as much as in them lies, they unchurch all the churches in the world, except those who agree with them in the mode of baptizing. — They deny the call and mission of their ministers; invalidate and nullify their ordinances; and excommunicate thousands, whom they cannot deny to be eminent for faith and holiness; and, in a word, make the door of the visible church so much narrower than Christ has made the gate of Heaven, that they reject far the greater part of those whom Christ receives.

Now, however willing we are to have Christian communion with all who, in a judgment of charity, are disciples of Christ; yet if we cannot have it, unless we will discard the greater part of our Christian brethren; deny the missions and call of those, whose ministry has been the means of our own conversion and edification; deny the validity of those ordinances, which have so often been breasts of nourishment and consolation to us; and renounce our baptism, which we are conscientiously

tiously persuaded is both valid and regular; this we cannot consent to.—And if any make this a ground of separation from us, let all who have imbibed the spirit of Christianity judge, whether it be our fault; and whether such rigidity in a matter so circumstantial, is agreeable to the meek and charitable spirit of the Gospel, or whether it does not rather look too much like Pharisaical superstition, to say no worse.

Methinks they have more reason to question the validity of their own administration, than to deny ours, upon the account of such irregularities as they charge upon us. For they cannot deny that the baptism which is administered in their communions was received at first by their predecessors, from the hands of such as, according to their principles, were unbaptized, and consequently could not be regularly authorized to administer the ordinance. If they think sprinkling to be no true baptism, much more have they reason to doubt the validity of immersion, when performed by an unbaptized and unauthorized administrator. And, if the first baptisms of that sect, when they first sprung up, were invalid, how can those administrations be thought valid and regular, which depend upon them?

We must therefore conclude, that dipping cannot be essential to baptism and Christian communion. The consequences are not to be endured.—The difficulties this principle will lead to, are inextricable.—We never can be satisfied that there is any true church, or valid baptism and ordinances in the world, upon these narrow principles.

These considerations are certainly of so much weight, that the necessity of dipping ought not to be insisted on, unless there be clear and cogent reasons for it. The substance of what is pleaded in favour of this mode, is reducible to these four heads:

“ That the proper meaning of the word Baptize always implies dipping.

“ That the scriptural examples of baptism were administered in this way.

“ That

“ That this mode of administration is plainly pointed out, when the Apostle says, “ We are buried with Christ in baptism.”

“ That dipping only answers to, and fitly represents the thing signified in baptism.”

On the contrary, we think, that the necessity of dipping cannot be argued from any of these topics; but that they will furnish us with a good warrant in favour of the mode of affusion or sprinkling. Let us examine the matter distinctly.

And our first inquiry is, what is the true and proper meaning of the word Baptize, and whether it always implies dipping? We grant that the institution of Christ requires whatever is essential to a true Baptism; but more than this cannot be held necessary. Now, we have no sort of evidence, that the word Baptize always implies dipping; but it plainly appears to be of a larger and more general signification. It properly imports a wetting, washing, bathing, in any mode, either by dipping, or sprinkling, or bleeding, or weeping, or otherwise. In proof of this we appeal,

In the first place, to those who are acknowledged to have been best skilled in the Greek language. All the Lexicons and critics, so far as I have found, agree, that the word signifies to wet or wash, as well as to dip.

But, perhaps, it may be said, “ That critics are not infallible, and it may be suspected that they are wrong in saying, That washing or wetting in general, in whatever mode, is expressed and meant by the word Baptism.”

I answer; in questions concerning the true meaning of words, the judgment of the learned, though not infallible, is doubtless of very considerable weight; and especially when we find a general consent among them. And that there certainly is upon this point, that washing or wetting, without respect to the mode, is Baptism, according to the usage of the word by the Greek writers. But if any are yet unsatisfied, we must examine the matter further; whether it can certainly

tainly be made to appear that the word bears the sense which has been said.

They who have been at the pains to examine the Greek classics (Dr. Wall in particular) have proved by clear and manifold examples, that those ancient writers were wont to use the word Baptize to express a washing or wetting, even where there was no dipping at all, but only a sprinkling. But I think it will be needless to inquire, how the word was commonly understood by heathen writers: it is the scriptural sense alone that we are searching after. If this can be ascertained, we need no more.

The word baptize is used in scripture to express such washings as did not require, and were not effected by dipping. In Luke xi. 38, we read, that a Pharisee who had invited Jesus to dine with him, " marvelled that he had not first Washed." The Greek word is Baptized. Here observe, that Jesus omitted to wash before dinner according to the Jewish custom, which was the reason why the Pharisee wondered; and that this Washing was properly called a Baptism. But how were the Jews wont ordinarily to wash before their meals? Did they dip themselves under water? If not, here is a plain proof and example of a washing that is called a baptism, without such a dipping. Now, if we turn to Mark vii. we shall see what that washing was that was customary among the Jews before eating. " When the Pharisees and some " of the Scribes saw some of his disciples eat bread, " with defiled (that is to say, with unwashen) hands, " they found fault. For the Pharisees, and all the " Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not. " And when they come from the market, except they " wash (the Greek is, except they are baptized) they " eat not." This shews, that in the language of the New Testament a person is said to be baptized, when a small part of his body is washed.

Again, in Heb. ix. 10, the Apostle speaks of the Jewish ritual as standing in divers Washings; the Greek is, different Baptisms. And it appears that purifications

purifications by sprinkling are especially intended. For he adds, with a plain reference to, and as an illustration of, what he had just said: "If the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ," &c. which shews that these purifications by sprinkling are instances of those washings or baptisms he had mentioned, and indeed some of the chief instances: otherwise it would not have been pertinent to his purpose to have noticed them on this occasion. A plain proof that sprinkling is a true baptism.

Further, the Apostle says of the Israelites who came out of Egypt, that "they were baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea," 1 Cor. x. 2. How were they baptized? Certainly they were not dipped. For they went on dry ground through the sea, which stood as a wall on each hand. It was the Egyptians only that were baptized by immersion. According to the account Moses gives, the Israelites could no otherwise be baptized in the cloud and sea, than by being sprinkled with rain from the one, and a spray from the other, as they passed along: to which Psal. lxxviii. 7, 8, 9, is thought to refer. Here is then another instance of baptism by sprinkling; which was a token of the separation or sanctification of the people to God. This gives a natural and easy account of the matter. But how unnatural and strained is our opponents' way of explaining it: "That the people having the sea on each hand, and the cloud over their heads, seemed to be as it were dipped or enclosed in water." On which I would observe, that the Apostle says not that they seemed to be as it were baptized, but in plain terms that they were Baptized. But whatever resemblances of dipping people may imagine, immersion without wetting is certainly no real baptism. For whether the mode of washing be essential or not, yet the washing or wetting itself is indeed essential to a true and proper baptism. If people may be baptized by having the water round them, though

though they were not wet by it at all, the dry hold of a ship upon the water would serve as well as Jordan: and, by going down into it, we shall be dipped in the sea in like manner as the Israelites were.—The fathers were baptized in the cloud and sea.—A true baptism necessarily implies wetting. They were not wet by immersion—they could not therefore be baptized by immersion—whatever washing they received could be only by sprinkling.—It was therefore in this mode undoubtedly that they were baptized. Which is another proof that sprinkling is a mode of baptism.

Let us now consider the words of Christ, Luke xii. 50, “I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished.” Christ here calls his sufferings a baptism. The sacred body of the blessed Jesus was truly and literally baptized. He was wet and bathed in his own tears, and sweat, and blood, in his agony in the garden, and when he was scourged, and nailed to the cross. And accordingly it was a common expression of the ancient fathers, concerning the martyrs, who had shed their blood in bearing witness to the Christian faith, that they were baptized with their own blood. Here is then, I think, another very good proof, that dipping is no ways essential to baptism. For, Christ was not dipped, and his martyrs were not dipped in their bloody baptism; but he was wet, and tinged, and bathed in his sweat and blood issuing from his pores and veins.

Let us now make some remarks on the baptism with the Holy Ghost, which is often spoken of. This is indeed a spiritual baptism, by which the subjects of it were sanctified, consecrated, and separated to God, in a higher and more eminent sense, than those were who had only been consecrated by water baptism. But how is this spiritual baptism explained? There are several expressions which are plainly of the same import; such as the “pouring out of the spirit” upon the subject.—When the Apostles were baptized with the Holy Ghost, according to Christ’s promise, Acts i. 5. Peter observes, that this was the fulfilment of the prophecy of Joel,

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Joel, "It shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, "I will pour out of my Spirit," Acts ii. 17; and again, verse 33, "That Christ being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed or poured forth those things which ye now see and hear." Here we see, "that pouring upon," and baptizing, are synonymous expressions. The one explains the other. Now, if the pouring out of the Spirit be the baptism of the Spirit, the pouring of water must also be a baptism of water. It is to be well observed, that as the Holy Spirit is in scripture often signified by water, as a fit emblem of his sanctifying and comforting influences; so the conferring of the Spirit upon us, which is undoubtedly the true intentment of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, is not represented by the similitude of dipping into water, but as a pouring or sprinkling of water upon us. Isa. xlv. 3, "I will pour waters on the thirsty, and floods on the dry ground; I will pour my Spirit on thy seed, and my blessing on thine offspring." See also Ezek. xxxvi. 27, "I will sprinkle clean water on you, and ye shall be clean. A new heart will I give you," &c. All which I think proves plainly, that sprinkling is in scripture considered as a mode of baptism. I will add one remark more. The baptism with the Holy Ghost is termed, an unction or anointing, 1 John ii. 20, 27. The holy oil, with which persons were anointed in their consecration, was a sign or emblem of the Holy Spirit given to them, to fit them for the offices to which they were called. The same also is signified by Christian baptism. Now, it is by pouring on of oil that persons are anointed; and it is by pouring out of the Spirit upon us, that our anointing or baptism with the Holy Ghost is expressed. As therefore baptism answers in signification to anointing, we may well conclude, that it may properly be administered in the same way, that is, by affusion. Can we doubt whether affusion be a true baptism, when we find that in scripture, Baptiz-

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ing, Pouring, Sprinkling, and Anointing, are parallel, and signify the same thing?

One remark more I will add. In all the different translations of the New Testament that I have seen, I have not found that the word *baptizo* in the original is ever rendered by a word signifying or implying immersion. But they either retain the original word, or render it washing or ablution; which we cannot think they would have done, if the authors had not been satisfied that this is the true scriptural sense.

To find and ascertain the signification of the word, will, I think, determine the dispute concerning the mode of Baptism. For which reason, I have examined the matter more carefully. And the conclusion in which this inquiry has issued, will not be at all weakened, but rather much confirmed by the account we have in the scriptures of the administration of this ordinance. And this leads us to consider,

Secondly, Whether the necessity of dipping can be argued from these scriptural precedents. Some suppose, that "John Baptist and the Apostles baptized by immersion only: And that we are bound herein strictly to follow their example." On the contrary, we can find no certainty that immersion was ever practised in the apostolic age. It is morally certain that this was not the constant mode of administration.

It is true, we read that Jesus was baptized by John in Jordan; and then came up out of the water, Mark i. 9, 10. "That the Jews were also baptized of John in Jordan," Mat. iii. 6. "That John baptized in Enon, because there was much water," John iii. 23. "That the Eunuch went down into the water with Philip, and when he was baptized they came up out of the water," Acts viii. 38, 39. But whether any of these were dipped is uncertain. It is not even certain whether in any of these instances they went into and were baptized in the water; though the texts are so rendered in our English Bible. But the Greek, which is the authentic standard, will fairly admit of this sense, as critics have often observed, viz.

That

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That they went down to, were baptized at, and went up from the water.\* But, waving this remark, supposing they did go into the water, and were there baptized; it does not follow that they were plunged. It is nothing strange or improbable if they stepped into the water, that they might be baptized by affusion. Though there was much water, or many waters (as the phrase properly signifies) at Enon, where John was baptizing; this is no proof that he dipped, or made use of much water to baptism, or that there was even a convenient depth of water for such a purpose. Travellers have reported that there are only springs and small rivulets to be found in this place. As multitudes resorted to John, a place that was well supplied with water, for their use and refreshment, would be most convenient, suppose none of them were dipped, as I find no certainty that they were. And if any should think that the administration of baptism at rivers, and in places where there was plenty of water, is a circumstance that favours immersion, though it is needless to contest this point, yet we might easily mention several things as probable arguments that immersion was not practised in these instances. It seems unlikely that mixed multitudes of both sexes should be dipped naked. And it was contrary to the Jewish custom to bathe with any of their clothes on; in which

\* The Greek text does not determine whether Jesus and the Jews were baptized in Jordan or only at Jordan, for the particles (en and eis) here used, signify in, at, or to. See Rom. viii. 34 (en.) At the right hand of God. Nor is it certain that the Eunuch went into the water. The particle (eis) is often rendered to, John xx. 4. The other disciple came first (eis) to the sepulchre, yet went he not in. Philip and the Eunuch went up (ek) from the water: so the particle is elsewhere rendered. See Matth. xii. 42. The queen of the south came (ek) from the uttermost ends of the earth. Jesus when he was baptized went up (apo) from the water; as the phrase most properly signifies. I do not mention these things as faulting our English translation. All that I aim at is, that the original may fairly be rendered either way; and that this circumstance, as it is immaterial, so it is left undetermined.

which respect they were so strict, that they held a person to be unclean, if but the top of one of his fingers were covered, when he bathed himself for his cleansing.—Or if immersion were received with the clothes on, this would require a shifting of apparel, which we have no hint of. Nor can we easily conceive how strangers, who came from home without any design of being baptized, as was the case with some, should be furnished with necessary change of raiment for this purpose. Or how John should be able, without a miracle, to bear the hardship of standing in the water up to his waist, a great part of his time, to dip the multitudes that came to him. These circumstances must surely weaken, if not overbalance, all probabilities or presumptions that can be pleaded in favour of immersion, in these instances.

But be this as it may, we have accounts of several instances, so circumstanced, that the supposition of their being dipped is most incredible. Particularly the 3000 baptized on the day of Pentecost. For it was at least nine o'clock when Peter began his sermon. After this he had a long conference, and with many words counselled, testified, and exhorted them. Then the Apostles had to receive a confession of faith from each of them distinctly; and then baptize them severally: which, though done in the quickest manner, would require the whole remainder of the day. But in the slower way of immersion, we cannot conceive how it could be done by the Apostles without a miracle. Nor may we suppose that the Apostles were assisted in this work by the seventy disciples, who appear not to have been authorized to administer the ordinances. Besides, how incredible is it, that they should on a sudden find conveniences for dipping so many, in the midst of a city, among zealous opposers: or that so many strangers should either be baptized naked, or have change of raiment. We cannot rationally think, that they could be baptized otherwise than by affusion. Nor is it probable that Paul was baptized by immersion: for, upon Ananias coming in to him, putting his hands upon him, &c. we read, that he immediately

immediately received his sight, arose, and was baptized; that is, in the house where he was : there being no hint of his going out to any water, weak as he was with long fasting and agitation of mind.\* It is not probable that those were dipped, who were baptized at the house of Cornelius, Acts x. 47. Peter seeing them filled with the Holy Ghost, said, " Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized." The natural sense is, Can any forbid water, to be brought or provided to baptize these : not, whether any could forbid their going to the water. And, in the account of their baptism, there is no hint of their going from the house.—It is highly improbable, that the jailer and his house were baptized by immersion ; for, this was done in the night, and in the prison, where there was no river nor pool to be imagined. Can it be thought, that the jailer, with his whole family, and his prisoners, whom he was charged to keep at his peril, should at such an hour, grope away in the dark, or go with a lanthorn or torch to a river or pool, no one knows where, and that through a city, just waked up with a great earthquake, and the streets, it is probable, filled with the frightened citizens ? They might all well expect to be taken up and punished, for helping the prisoners to make their escape. Nor is it credible that the Apostles would have done such a thing, who would not leave the prison till the magistrates took them out.—The administration of baptism would, doubtless, have been deferred, if it could not then have been attended to without all this difficulty and danger. Besides, there is no account of their going out to the water or leaving the prison. The house of the jailer, into which he brought the Apostles, seems to have been a separate apartment of the building, where the keeper dwelt, that

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\* Acts ix. 17, 18. Note, Paul was baptized without a profession of faith, upon Christ's testimony concerning him, that he was a chosen vessel. The testimony of Christ, that infants are of the kingdom of heaven, are holy, are interested in the promise, is as good a warrant for baptizing them without a profession of their faith.

he might conveniently attend his charge. And we may here make this general remark, that among all the instances of baptism mentioned in the New Testament, it is never said or intimated, that they went from the place where they happened to be, to any river or stream, that they might be baptized in or at it. But all who are said to have been baptized in any stream, were by it, when they first offered themselves to baptism.

Thirdly, The necessity of immersion is argued from the Apostle's words, Rom. vi. 4. "We are buried with Christ in baptism." Which words have been supposed to refer to this mode of burying the subject in water. But it does not appear that any such reference or allusion is here intended. The Apostle is here shewing, that "Christians may not live any longer in sin, inasmuch as they are dead to it." To prove and illustrate this, he reminds us of our being "baptized into Christ." By baptism, we are not only dedicated to Christ, and brought into a special relation to him as his disciples; but, our baptism is the outward sign of our ingrafting into Christ, and so of our spiritual union to him, and communion with him, in the benefits obtained for the members of his body, by his crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection; and also of our obligation to a spiritual conformity to his crucifixion, death, burial, and resurrection, as is noted and illustrated in what follows: Being thus "baptized into Christ, we are baptized in to his death." We not only participate of the benefits obtained by his death, but are bound to a spiritual conformity to him in his crucifixion and death; by the crucifixion and death of our old man, with its affections and lusts. "Therefore are we buried with him by baptism into death." Baptism signifies our union and communion with Christ; and our profession and obligation to a conformity to him, "in his burial," as well as his crucifixion and death. The old man, with his deeds, must be put off, utterly rejected, and buried. We must, in respect of our former lusts and conversation, be as if we were "dead and buried." We, by  
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our baptism, are obliged to have done with these things; to endeavour, that the body of sin may be quite mortified and destroyed. But this work of mortification, in which "we are made conformable to Christ's death," is in order to a spiritual resurrection; in conformity to the example, and by the quickening virtue of Christ's resurrection: "That like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life." So that according to the Apostle, baptism imports our union and conformity to Christ in his crucifixion, death, and resurrection, as well as in his burial. And why baptism should be supposed to bear an outward resemblance of his burial, rather than of his crucifixion and death; or why any should fancy an illusion to the mode of immersion, I can see no reason.

I might further observe, that dipping a person in water does not resemble the burial of Christ, who was not laid in a common grave, but in a tomb hewn out of the side of a rock, into which they entered by a door.—Nor does it resemble a common burial, which is not so properly the letting down the body into the grave, as the casting in the earth upon it; of which the sprinkling or pouring of water on a person is no unfit representation; but dipping bears no resemblance to it. It is not an outward, but a spiritual conformity to Christ's death and burial, that is intended by our being buried with him in baptism.

Let us now inquire, Fourthly, Whether dipping answers to, and represents the thing signified in Baptism better than sprinkling. It has just been observed, that Baptism is the outward sign and token of the application of the benefits of redemption to believers, in their justification and sanctification. "Christ washes us from our sins in his own blood." And Baptism, as the outward sign of the application of Christ's blood, is, "for the washing away of sins." But how is the application of Christ's blood for our cleansing represented? It is called, "the blood of sprinkling." And the Apostle speaks of the "sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."

"Christ." But we are never said to be cleansed from sin by being dipped into the blood of Christ.—Again, Baptism is the instituted sign of our having the gift of the Holy Ghost bestowed upon us. "Be baptized," says Peter, "and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Now, the donation of the Holy Ghost is never expressed by our being dipped into the Holy Ghost; but by his being poured out, and our being sprinkled thereby; which is called our being baptized with the Spirit. Sprinkling is therefore a more apt representation of the application of the blood of Christ, and the influences of the Spirit, for the cleansing of our souls from sin. The argument, therefore, from the analogy of the sign with the thing signified, is plainly in favour of sprinkling rather than dipping.

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## THE SECOND PART.

### *On the* SUBJECTS *of* BAPTISM.

**T**HE second part of the argument in hand, was to consider who are the proper subjects of baptism, or to whom this ordinance is to be administered.

Our present inquiry, concerning the subjects of baptism, is, Who they are that, according to the gospel rule, are to be admitted by the church? In answer to which, we say, that all who make a credible profession of faith, are proper subjects, together with infants, or children in minority. It is agreed, that professed believers are subjects of baptism. And that this ordinance is not to be administered to one of adult age, unless he has in some manner made a credible profession of (at least, penitential) faith. But that the infants of members of the visible church are to be received as members also, and as the proper subjects of baptism, has been denied by some; and the administering the ordinance

ordinance to infants, has been censured as irregular, unwarrantable, and of no validity or advantage.

I shall therefore endeavour to prove and vindicate the "divine right of infant baptism," as briefly and plainly as I can.

In pursuance of this design, I shall, first, represent the chief and plainest reason, upon which I believe infant baptism to be a divine ordinance. Then I will consider the principal objections that are made to it.

But before I enter on the proof of the point before us, let it be observed and remembered—That there is nothing positive in the New Testament against infant baptism. It is no where said or hinted, that the Apostles forbid, or refused, or declined to baptize infants; or that any child of a believer was, after he was grown up, baptized upon a profession of faith. It must also be acknowledged, that infants are capable not only of the outward sign of baptism, but also of having an interest in the blessings and Grace of the New Covenant, and coming under its bonds, which is the thing signified in the ordinance, and that they need those New Covenant blessings. Further, it is no where declared in scripture, either in express, or equivalent terms, that "adult persons only," or that "none but those who believe," or profess faith, are to be baptized. In short, there is absolutely and perfectly nothing that stands in the way of our embracing the doctrine of infant baptism, if we can find any kind of evidence in favour of it, either express or consequential. This then is what we have now to inquire into, viz. Whether any such evidence appears? And I think enough may be collected from the scriptures, to put the matter beyond all reasonable doubt.

And my first argument is taken from the church membership of infants:

All those who are to be received as members of the church of Christ, are the subjects of baptism.—But infants are to be received as members

members of the church of Christ. They are therefore subjects of Baptism.

First, I say that all who are to be received as members of the visible church, are the subjects of baptism. This is granted by our opponents, particularly by Dr. Gill, most expressly. "Let it be proved," says he, "that infants are or ought to be members of Gospel churches—and we shall readily admit them," i. e. to baptism.—Answer to Dickinson, p. 89.

Some have pretended "that it is inconsistent to say that a right to baptism is grounded upon church membership, and yet that we are admitted into the church by baptism." But this is a mere cavil. The right of church membership is one thing; and admission into the visible church is another. They who are qualified for admission into the church, according to the rule of the gospel, are members by right, before they are members by admission. And they are accordingly to be received as rightful members by baptism, and so admitted in an orderly way to those subsequent privileges of Christian communion, to which baptism is a regular and solemn introduction. For the right of church membership, though it gives an immediate claim to admission into the church by baptism, yet it does not give an immediate and orderly claim to any, while unbaptized, to all the privileges of admitted and baptized members. But be this as it will, whether the right of church membership be antecedent to baptism, or baptism be antecedent to church membership, it cannot be denied that all those are the proper subjects of baptism, who are or ought to be admitted as members of the gospel church.

Now if it can be made to appear, that infants are or ought to be acknowledged and admitted as members of the visible church, we must unavoidably conclude that they are subjects of baptism. And this is what I undertake to prove. And there is a remarkable passage recorded by three of the Evangelists which seems

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to be sufficient to determine the point. I will recite it at large, collecting all the particulars mentioned in the several accounts. Matt. xix. 13. 15. Mark x. 13. 16. Luke xviii. 15, 16.—“ And they brought unto  
 “ him little children, infants, that he should touch  
 “ them, put his hands on them, and pray: and his  
 “ disciples rebuked them, i. e. those who brought  
 “ them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much dis-  
 “ pleased, and called them to him, and said unto them,  
 “ Suffer the little children to come unto me, and for-  
 “ bid them not, for of such is the kingdom of hea-  
 “ ven. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not  
 “ receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he  
 “ shall not enter therein. And he took them up in  
 “ his arms, put or laid his hands upon them, and  
 “ blessed them.”

These were young “ infant” children which were brought to Christ, whom he took up in his arms, as we are expressly told. They who brought them gave evidence of their faith in him; for they brought them that he might put his hands on them and pray. We may also observe, that it was agreeable to the mind of Christ that they should be brought to him; for when the disciples rebuked those that brought them, Jesus, seeing it, was much displeased. The disposition they manifested on this occasion to despise little ones, and set themselves above them, as if young children were not fit to be introduced into their company, Christ did much dislike. And he was also displeased, as it seems, to find they were so dull of understanding, and so mistaken in their apprehensions. They might reasonably have concluded, that as little children always had been received as members of the church of God, as Christ had not intimated any design to cut them off from this their right, as they needed his blessing, and were capable of it; on these grounds they ought to have concluded, that it was fit and proper that they should be presented to the Messiah, the king of Israel, as his disciples and subjects, that they might receive his blessing.—But the disciples seem to have reasoned  
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in a quite different manner, as some others have done since. “ To what purpose is it to bring these little children hither? They are not capable of being taught. They do not understand what is intended to be done with them. It will be of no advantage to them. We cannot look upon them to be believers, or fit to belong to our society.” Such thoughts as these they seem to have had. For our Saviour’s words on this occasion are as plain and pointed as possible against this error.—Their mistake at this time gave our Lord a fit occasion to declare his mind fully and expressly upon the case of infants; that they are of the kingdom of heaven; and therefore none should forbid or discourage any from bringing and presenting them to him. “ Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

From these words it appears, in the first place, that infants are the children of the covenant, and belong to the church of God: for this is what we are to understand by the kingdom of heaven, as I shall shew presently. Such as these, properly and naturally signifies, persons of this sort or class, and that come under this denomination.—They were included among that sort of persons; even as the woman taken in adultery was one of those condemned by that law, “ which commanded that such should be stoned.”

Some would fain have the meaning of this expression to be, “ That those who resemble little children in humility belong to the kingdom of heaven.” But how strained and unnatural is this? Christians are to resemble lambs and doves for meekness, as well as infants. But what should we think of a man that should say to his servant: “ Suffer the sheep and lambs to come to me, and hinder them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven?”—Would not this be highly improper, and worse than ridiculous? And yet this would be just as proper as the words of Christ are, according to the meaning that these would force upon them.—The reason Christ gives why the little children should

should be brought to him, is, because of such is the kingdom of God. And a very plain and pertinent reason it is, as we understand it. For if children belong to the kingdom of Christ, we can see a manifest fitness that they should be presented to him as his subjects and people, that he might own them, and give them his blessing. But what weight or pertinency is there in such a reason as our adversaries would assign for bringing these children to Christ? "Suffer little children to come to me, for though it is true they belong not to my kingdom, yet the subjects of my kingdom are somewhat like them. There is that in little children which looks like meekness and humility, and is a fit emblem of it." Must every thing then that any ways resembles true Christians be brought to Christ, for him to lay his hand upon it, and pray over it? What an uncouth, unintelligible reason is this for bringing children to Christ? Which will serve as well for a reason why lambs and doves should be brought and presented to him, as Mr. Henry well observes. Because the kingdom of God consists of grown persons, meek and harmless like children, is it a just and plain consequence, that children should be brought and presented to Christ, though they belong not to his kingdom? Surely no one has any cause to be displeased with another (as Christ was with his disciples) for not apprehending weight in such a reason as this. Indeed there is no weight in it.

Again : The reception which Christ gave these children, and his actions towards them, may put it out of all doubt, that he acknowledged them as the subjects of his kingdom. For he took them into his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them. Christ never pronounced a solemn blessing upon any but those whom he owned as the subjects of his kingdom. By laying his hands on these children and blessing them, he recognized them as his own people, and put upon them the same token of acknowledgment which he gave his disciples immediately before his ascension. The blessing was always looked upon as a sacred thing, which

belonged only to the worshippers and people of God ; especially that solemn religious blessing in the name of God, with imposition of hands, which had been practised in the church in all ages. None were the subjects of this, upon any occasion that we read of, but they that belonged to the church. When we read that God blessed Noah, and Abraham, and the other patriarchs, we have no doubt but that hereby he owned them, in the most solemn manner, as his people. And shall any be so unreasonable as to deny or call in question the church membership of infants, after Christ himself has not only declared, that of such is the kingdom of heaven, but has given this further token and testimony of the same, even laying on his hands, and pronouncing a blessing upon them : which is as distinguishing a token of church membership as baptism itself, or any other ordinance whatever.

Infants then must be allowed to belong to the kingdom of heaven. Christ has declared them so by words and actions as significant as possible. But, it may be inquired, What are we to understand by the kingdom of heaven ? I answer, it is plainly the church that is here meant. It will be needless to confirm this by particular quotations ; they are so many, and so well known to all who have read the New Testament with any attention. Nor is it denied by any that I know of : and, I think, it is the Visible Church that is to be understood.

Christ declares, that these children were then members of the kingdom of heaven. " Of such is the kingdom of heaven." But, will any say, that the kingdom of glory consists of those who are here upon earth ? They were upon earth, and were in the kingdom of heaven upon earth, if they were in it at all ; that is, in the kingdom of grace or Visible Church.

But, if it were supposed, that these words are to be understood as affirming, that children belong to the invisible church, and as such, are heirs of the kingdom of glory ; yet this will prove that they ought to be acknowledged and received as members of the visible church.

church. For, can they be reasonably refused a place in the church on earth, whom Christ affirms to be heirs of heaven? If we have evidence that they belong to Christ, as his peculiar people, there needs no more to give any one a clear and undoubted right, in the account of the church, to be received as belonging to him, or as members of the church on earth. And what better evidence can there be that any are subjects of the kingdom of heaven, than the testimony of the king himself? Is there any profession of faith that ought to have more credit in the church? Though infants are not able to speak for themselves, yet Christ has spoken for them, declaring, that “of such is the kingdom of heaven.” And, is not the testimony of Christ a sufficient credential to warrant our receiving them? Our Lord subjoins the following memorable words, in which he strikes at the very root of his disciples’ error, which their conduct discovered. “Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter therein.”—The disciples were much disposed to stand upon their distinctions. They seemed to think that they had a clearer and better title to the privileges of the Messiah’s kingdom than infants. They were actual believers and followers of Christ; which could not be said of babes. If these are admitted to have a part in this kingdom, it must be considered as a special indulgence and favour to them, who have done nothing to give them any claim to such a privilege. Whereas, thought they, we have left all for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. And, shall these be allowed to have as good a title as we? “Yea, says Christ, their title is as good as yours in all respects.” It is, indeed, an act of mere grace and favour, that infants are admitted. They have done nothing to merit it. And, do you imagine, that any thing that you have done gives you any peculiar claim to these privileges? Do you consider the kingdom of heaven as the due reward for any doings of yours? No, be it known to you, that your title arises entirely from the free grace and gift of God, as well as theirs. If you will not receive the kingdom of God, and hold it by  
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the same title that little children do (viz. as the free gift of God made over to them by his covenant and promise; as his adopted children) you shall not enter therein.\*

The common exception, "That these infants were not baptized by Christ, nor were brought to him for any such purpose," is altogether impertinent. We do not argue, that infants are the subjects of baptism, because we suppose that these infants were baptized by Christ; but that infants belong to the church, is here plainly asserted; and that all such as belong to the church, are the subjects of baptism, cannot be denied. It is further asked, "Why Christ did not then baptize them, if they were proper subjects?" Before men urge such questions, they should make it appear, that these infants had not been baptized before. However, whether they were baptized or not, is of no importance to us. If they were not baptized, it is not incumbent on us to give the reason. But it is incumbent on those who ask such questions, to shew, Why it should be thought necessary, that all members of the gospel church should then be baptized before baptism was fully settled as the ordinary rite of admission, which was not till after Christ's resurrection. But, if Christ did not baptize these children, yet he gave them as sure a token of church membership as baptism itself, when he laid his hands upon them and blessed them. It is further objected, "Christ's entire silence about infant baptism at this time, has no favourable aspect on such a practice." Answer, Christ having asserted the church membership of infants, and solemnly blessed them with imposition of hands, and having said nothing against the baptism of them, more than of adults, these things have a very favourable

\* "Receiving the kingdom of God as a little child," is commonly explained to mean, receiving the privileges of the kingdom of heaven with humility, or a child-like temper. I think, it gives a sense more apposite to the occasion, if we understand the words as importing, that we must receive and hold the kingdom of heaven by the same right and title with children.

vourable aspect on the practice of infant baptism, and imply a good warrant for it. After having thus owned them as his people, both by words and actions, if it had been his will that the sacrament of induction should not henceforth be administered to infants, as heretofore, but only to adults, he would not have failed to have given some intimation on this occasion, that notwithstanding what he had said and done, infants were not to be baptized. Christ's saying nothing against infant baptism on this occasion, when it appears so necessary to prevent mistakes, had infant baptism been contrary to his will, has no favourable aspect on the practice of those who refuse to admit them.

I have enlarged the more upon this proof of the church membership of infants, because I take it to be very decisive and unanswerable. And I shall lay before you another passage, which will fairly lead us to the same conclusion. Mark ix. 36, 37, "Jesus took a child  
" and set him in the midst of them; and when he had  
" taken him in his arms, he said unto them; whosoever  
" shall receive one of such children in my name, receiv-  
" eth me."

Now observe, Christ says, "Whosoever shall receive  
" one of such children" (or, "this child," as it is in Luke ix. 48) "in my name, receiveth me." To receive one in the name of Christ, is to receive him as belonging to him. So the words are clearly explained in the 41st verse of this chapter, "Whosoever shall give  
" you to drink a cup of water in my name, because ye  
" belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not  
" lose his reward." Since then Christ would have us receive little children in his name, as belonging to him, and declares, that in so doing we receive him; we may assuredly conclude, that they are to be reputed as belonging to him, as the members of his church. When, therefore, a believer offers his child to the church, to be received by baptism, as belonging to Christ, and admitted as a member of the same body; shall they refuse to receive it in his name? Shall they thus despise Christ's little ones, as to shut the doors of his house upon them,

and, as much as in them lies, "cast them out of the inheritance of the Lord, and declare that they have no part in the Lord, and lay such a stumbling block before our children, to make them cease from fearing the Lord?" Josh. xxii. 25. God forbid! Take heed that ye despise not, and offend not one of these little ones.

Let us now consider more particularly the words of our text, containing the Apostolic commission. "Go teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." It has been observed, that the words properly signify, "Go make or admit all nations disciples, baptizing them—teaching them," &c. This our opposers do not deny. But they say that no one can be made a disciple but by teaching; which is true only with respect to adults: because no "such persons" are to be admitted into the school of Christ, but by their own consent, and a previous profession of their faith in him, and obedience to him; and this necessarily pre-requires teaching. But to argue from hence, that infants are not to be admitted as disciples, because not in a present capacity of being taught, and professing their faith, is no better than begging the question, talking at random, and without proof. Though adults are not made disciples, till they are first taught, and are not admitted but upon a profession of faith, yet with infants the case is otherwise. They are to be admitted, by the order of Jesus Christ, without a personal "profession and consent," of which they are not capable. But this may be further considered afterwards.

Let us now see whether any thing can be argued from the words in favour of infant discipleship and baptism.—When the Apostles received an order to disciple all nations, they would naturally understand, that they had it in charge to make all nations proselytes, to introduce and admit them into the church of Christ, as a school in which they were to be taught and trained

up in the knowledge and observance of Christianity, in order to their being meet for heaven. It is true, neither infants nor adults are expressly named. But the Apostles were sent to disciple and baptize "the nations," which none can deny, include persons of every age. And the Apostles must needs have understood that it was their business to make disciples of the infants, and baptize them as well as others. For, let it be remembered, that the Apostles had been educated in the Jewish church, of which infants had all along been undoubted members. They understood that the membership of such had never been called in question, since there had been a church in the world. They knew that the infants of proselytes from among the Gentiles were constantly admitted and circumcised, together with their parents. Not only so, but such infants were baptized; as the ancient Jews report. They knew that Christ had taught them that little children belonged to the kingdom of heaven; that he had accordingly laid his hands, and pronounced a solemn blessing, upon them; and signified his will that they be received in his name, as belonging to him; and that themselves had been reprov'd by him for forbidding infants to be brought to receive his blessing. They knew that the admission of the children into the church, with the parents, was always reckoned a great privilege; that Christ never said or intimated that it was his will that infants should be cut off, or not admitted still as members of the gospel church. They understood that the privileges of the church were to be enlarged, and not abridged in any respect.—Now, the Apostles, whose views and apprehensions may have been such as have been represented, would, without doubt, have understood that they were instructed by their commission to admit the children with the parents into the number of proselytes by the initiating rite, as had been the constant practice of the church.—They must have understood the matter as a minister who had never heard that infant baptism was ever objected to, would understand

understand his charge, if he was ordained and sent out to preach to the heathen, and gather churches among them, baptizing them. It would be unnatural and highly unreasonable for them to understand the matter otherwise. This then must be received as the just interpretation of the commission. It is the natural and true meaning: which is so far from cutting off infants from the gospel church, that it furnishes us with a good warrant for admitting them.

We have another unanswerable proof that the children of believers are to be members of the visible church, and subjects of baptism, in 1 Cor. vii. 14. "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean, but now are they holy." The Apostle had just said, that a believer ought not to separate from an unbelieving wife, who was willing to continue in the marriage relation. And in these words he removes a doubt which might be apt to arise in their minds, viz. Whether the children born in such a marriage were to be of the church, with the believing parent; or were to be ranked with the unbelieving parent, and so reckoned among heathens that were without?—Though infants had always been received as members of the Old Testament church, yet when the Jews had, in the time of Ezra, married strange wives which had born them children, these children were not received; but it was ordered that they be put away, together with their heathen parents, as unclean. It might therefore be a scruple, whether a believer and member of the Christian church were obliged or allowed to live in the state of marriage with an unbeliever; and whether their children were not to be excluded from the church, as the unclean offspring of a heathen parent; as had been determined among the Jews in the case just mentioned. This point the Apostle plainly resolves, declaring that a believer is not defiled by having conjugal society with an unbeliever. On the contrary, says he, "The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife," or rather is sanctified in

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or to the wife, “ and the unbelieving wife is sanctified “ in or to the husband.” That is, the believer has a lawful and sanctified enjoyment of an unbelieving yoke-fellow. For, as the Apostle elsewhere teaches us, “ All things are pure to him that is pure. And every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused. For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.” Thus the unbelieving husband or wife is sanctified to the believer, as every creature of God is, which we may have occasion to use. Formerly, all that were out of the pale of the church were accounted unclean; and a Jew would have been defiled by living with a heathen wife. But now there is no defilement in the lawful use of any of God’s creatures. They are all sanctified to a believer. Or we may take the meaning of these words thus: a believer and unbeliever, being married together, are one flesh; they are one principle or source of offspring. But though an unbeliever, considered in himself personally, is unholy, and has no claim to church privileges; yet the children are entitled to these privileges as fully and perfectly in all respects, as if both the parents were believers. For the unbelieving husband being one flesh with the believing wife, is sanctified in or by her, so far as respects the church privileges of children. The husband, though an unbeliever, is, in consequence of his union in marriage with a believer, in some sort sanctified. The unbeliever, in this relation, is capable of transmitting church privileges to his offspring, to as good advantage as any believer.

The Apostle goes on—“ Else were your children “ unclean,” as the heathen were termed and accounted. All those who were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenant of the promise, and not members of the church of God, were commonly reputed uncircumcised and unclean. They were not admitted into the holy place, or to attend on holy ordinances. Now, if the unbelieving wife were not sanctified to and by the believer, as has been said, the children must have been unclean, and so not be received

ceived as members of the church, and subjects of holy ordinances.—“ But now they are holy”—and are to be admitted into the visible church, into the society and fellowship of those who are visibly separated from the rest of the world, and devoted to God as his holy people. The word, Holy, as it is used in scripture, is applied to persons and things that are devoted and dedicated to God. Men are termed holy either as being separated from the rest of mankind, and standing in a peculiar relation to God, as his visible, professing people; or as being conformed to the will and moral image of God in temper and practice. The one is called a relative, the other an inherent holiness. The first is attributed to all those who belong to the visible church. Thus the people of Israel are all spoken of as an holy people. And, upon the same account, gospel churches are considered as consisting of saints or holy persons. For, though it is not supposed that they are all really and inherently holy, or partakers of a divine nature, yet they are visibly the people of God, separated and devoted to him. But let it be particularly noted, that no person is ever stiled holy, from the beginning to the end of the Bible, except he be of the church of God. And in the New Testament, a Saint, or Holy Person, a Disciple of Christ, a Member of the Church, and a Subject of the Kingdom of Heaven, are of the same signification. Now, since we find that the title or appellation of Holy is never given to any person in the world, except he be of the church; and since the Apostle declares that the children of believers are holy; it is a plain and undeniable consequence, that such children are of the church, and are the proper subjects of baptism, as was to be proved.

The Antipedobaptists have endeavoured, in vain, to wring and wrest these words of the Apostle to a compliance with their tenets.—But, in the first place they would persuade us, “ That the Holiness which the  
“ Apostle here intends, cannot be that which is im-  
“ plied in, and connected with church membership.—  
“ For,

“ For, they say, the same Holiness which is ascribed  
 “ to the children, is also attributed to the unbelieving  
 “ parent.—If the children are Holy, the unbelieving  
 “ husband and wife are also said to be sanctified.”  
 But, I answer, the Apostle’s words plainly shew, that  
 the unbelieving yoke-fellow is only sanctified to the  
 believer, as all the creatures of God are said to be  
 sanctified to the Saints, so as that they may have a  
 holy use and enjoyment of them. He is not sanctified  
 in respect to God, but only in respect to his wife  
 and offspring, who derive no more defilement either  
 by conjugal cohabitation with or by natural generation  
 from him, than if he were a believer.—In a word, the  
 unbelieving husband is only sanctified in that particular  
 respect, and unto the particular purpose there pointed  
 at, as has been said.—But the Children are declared  
 to be not unclean, but “ holy.” A title which  
 is never given to any but those that are of the church.  
 Unbelievers who belong not to the church may be  
 sanctified, or prepared as instruments to answer the  
 purposes of divine goodness to the saints. But this  
 respective sanctification does never give them the denomination  
 of “ Holy ones.” The words of the text,  
 and the reason of the thing therefore plainly shew,  
 that the sanctification of the unbelieving husband or  
 wife is a different thing from the holiness of the children—  
 This gives a good, pertinent, and instructive  
 sense to the Apostle’s words, which are taken and explained  
 in the scriptural sense, as no doubt they ought  
 to be.

And hence we see, there is no just foundation for  
 that objection, “ That the unbelieving parent being  
 “ sanctified by a believing yoke-fellow, may as well  
 “ be concluded to be a member of the church and  
 “ subject of baptism, as the children whose holiness  
 “ depends upon this sanctification of the parents.”  
 For a person’s being sanctified in some certain respect,  
 does not give him the denomination of a holy one, in  
 the language of the scriptures; which is a peculiar  
 and appropriate title of those who belong to the  
 church,

church, and is never given to any others of the children of men. And, since the children are Holy, which is not said of the unbelieving parent, though in some respect sanctified, the children are to be acknowledged as of the church, but not the unbelieving parent.

Let us now consider how this passage is expounded by those on the other side. And here they would persuade us, "that the Apostle means, what they call, a matrimonial holiness." And that the meaning of the text is, "The unbelieving husband is married or espoused to the wife, and the unbelieving wife married to the husband: else were your children bastards, but now are they legitimate." I do not think it will be needful to say much to expose the unreasonableness of this interpretation. It is so strained and unnatural, it so sinks and spoils the sense, and is so utterly without foundation, that I think it may pass for one of the most improbable, unhandsome, and incredible glosses, that we shall readily meet with upon any text whatever. Neither the Corinthians, nor any one else doubted, or had need to be told, that the unbelieving husband had been and was married to the wife, and the unbelieving wife to the husband. For, how could they be husband and wife, if they had not been married together? And, can any believe in sober earnest, that the inspired Apostle filled up his epistle with such a trifling, ridiculous business, as telling his converts, that if they had children without being married, the children would be bastards, but now as they had been married, they were legitimate? Far be it from any Christian to burlesque the sacred scriptures at this rate.—A profane infidel, who would ridicule the Apostle, could scarce give his words a meaner, and more ludicrous turn.

THAT the infant seed of believers are members of the church, and subjects of baptism, further appears from their interest in that gracious covenant, by which  
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the church is constituted. To state and clear up this argument at full length, would require a large discourse. I must only give a brief sketch.

I think it is granted, that all who are visibly interested in the new covenant, are to be received as members of the visible church; and that the outward token of an interest in the covenant, and of admission into the visible church belongs to them. After the fall of man, by the breach of the first covenant, God was pleased to reveal a new and gracious covenant, of which Christ was the Mediator; which was to be the rule of intercourse and communion between God and his people, and the great charter by which the church was formed. All who were taken into this covenant were thereby separated from the rest of mankind, and brought into a peculiar relation to God, as his people and subjects, to be ruled by the special laws, and observe the special ordinances, and enjoy the special privileges of his kingdom. This kingdom of grace was to make an outward appearance upon earth, and have an outward administration in the visible church, according to the rules which God ordained. And according to these rules, all who were visibly in the covenant were to be admitted as members of the visible church. They were to have the appointed token of the covenant put upon them, and were visible subjects of the outward ordinances and privileges of the church. For, a visible interest in the covenant, a right of membership in the visible church, a right to the token of the covenant and of church membership, and to the outward ordinances and privileges, which, according to the covenant, belong to the church; these things are inseparably connected together, and mutually infer each other. Many, it is true, who are in the covenant visibly, and in the acceptance of the church, have not a real and saving interest in new covenant blessings. They will not at least be owned by God as his peculiar people; nor is there a spiritual, effectual, and saving application of the grace of the

new covenant to them. Hence arises the common distinction between the visible and the invisible church.

Now, if this covenant, by which the church is formed and constituted, includes the children with the parents, then the token of the covenant, and of admission into the church, belongs regularly and visibly to them. This then is the point we have to prove.

Let it be remembered, in the first place, that the supposition of infants being comprehended in the covenant, and being the subjects of its outward administration in the visible church, is no ways incredible, on account of any incapacity in them. For, they are certainly capable of coming under its bonds, and having the grace of it secured and applied to them; and they greatly need new covenant blessings. It is an important privilege to them to belong to the visible church, that they may, under its watch, instructions, and discipline, be trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. They are also capable of having the outward token of the covenant put upon them; which may afterwards be improved by them for their excitement and encouragement in the service of God. In short, infants are, for ought that appears, as capable subjects as any, of the obligations, the privileges, and token of the covenant; and they stand in like need thereof with others. The presumption, therefore, is not at all against, but rather in favour of their being comprehended in the covenant, as well as others.

We may further observe, that it has always been customary for children to be included in covenants with the parents; to come under the bonds, and receive the privileges therein stipulated. That this is common in covenants which take place among mankind, is known to all; and no one imagines there is any thing unreasonable and improper in it, if the covenant be in itself good and reasonable. It is also certain, that when God has been pleased to covenant with mankind, the children as well as the parents have been comprehended. This appears to have been the case in  
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the covenant with Adam, with Noah, with Abraham, and with the Israelites at Horeb. Indeed, this seems to have been the case in all God's federal transactions with the children of men. It is, therefore, altogether agreeable to the common sense of mankind, and the method of God's government of his people, that his covenant with them should respect and take in both them and their seed. And this consideration may, I think, render it quite credible and probable that the new covenant, by which the church is constituted, may be, in this respect, similar to God's covenant transactions with mankind, which, so far as appears, have constantly comprehended the children with the parents.

But, having premised these observations, I shall proceed to the direct and positive proof, that the children of God's covenant people have also an interest in the covenant. The new covenant, which, I have said, is the great charter by which the church is formed, does most plainly and expressly take them in. It was, indeed, this new covenant I am speaking of, that was revealed to our first parents the very day that they fell, and by the proposal of it to them, they were constituted the visible church and people of God, before they were expelled from paradise.—It was again revealed to Noah after the flood, whereby he, with his children, were again recognized by God as his church and people. The same covenant was afterwards more clearly and distinctly revealed to Abraham, and the ordinance of circumcision was annexed, as an outward sign and token. And though there are sufficient intimations, that the seed of God's visible and professed people had always, from the beginning, been considered as in the covenant and church of God; yet as this is most expressly declared in the revelation which God made of his gracious covenant to Abraham, I shall take this more especially as the ground of the present argument.

The Abrahamic covenant, I say, was but a plainer exhibition of that same new and gracious covenant,  
which

which had been all along the foundation and charter of the church. The addition of a new ordinance, and the grant of a particular country to him and his natural posterity, made no alteration in its substantial duties or privileges, but only pointed out a different external administration, which was to take place in the church. Hitherto the external administration of the church seems to have been domestic; the ordinances of worship being distinctly and separately administered in the several families of the patriarchs: nor do we read of solemn assemblies for the purpose of attending public worship. But, as God had a design of forming a national church of the posterity of Abraham, all the members of which were to join and have an external communion with each other in the same ordinances, and acts of worship; this different mode of administration was provided for in the grant of the land of Canaan to the posterity of Abraham; that so they might be formed into a political body, and live together, for their convenient attendance on holy ordinances. But this provision, which was made for a different external administration in the church, is no argument but that the covenant which was revealed to Abraham was, for substance, the very same with that by which the church had at first been formed, and had all along subsisted.

This may shew how unreasonably some would insinuate, that we would make several covenants of grace. As if the same covenant could not be revealed "at sundry times, and in divers manners," and as if there might not be a different external administration of ordinances in the church at different times, and yet the covenant by which the church is constituted remain substantially the same.

Now, that we may distinctly state this argument, grounded on the covenant with Abraham, let us take a view of it as we have it recorded in Gen. xvii. "I am the Almighty God, walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly."

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“ As for me, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt  
 “ be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name  
 “ any more be Abram, but thy name shall be Abra-  
 “ ham; for a father of many nations have I made  
 “ thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and  
 “ I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come  
 “ out of thee.—And I will establish my covenant be-  
 “ tween me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their  
 “ generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a  
 “ God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I  
 “ will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the  
 “ land in which thou art a stranger; all the land of  
 “ Canaan for an everlasting possession, and I will be  
 “ their God. Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore,  
 “ thou and thy seed after thee in their generations.  
 “ This is my covenant which ye shall keep between  
 “ me and you, and thy seed after thee: Every man  
 “ child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall  
 “ circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be  
 “ a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And  
 “ he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among  
 “ you, every man child in your generations; he that  
 “ is born in the house, or bought with money of any  
 “ stranger which is not of thy seed. He that is born  
 “ in thy house, and he that is bought with thy mo-  
 “ ney must needs be circumcised; and my covenant  
 “ shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.  
 “ And the uncircumcised man child, whose flesh of  
 “ his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut  
 “ off from his people: he hath broken my cove-  
 “ nant.”

From this memorable passage, which I have recited  
 at large, we see that the Abrahamic covenant compre-  
 hended the children with the parents, in their succes-  
 sive generations; and that the outward token of an in-  
 terest in the covenant was to be applied to infants.  
 We may further observe, that all who were included in  
 this covenant were by it constituted a visible church,  
 separated from the rest of the world to be the people  
 of God. That grand article of the covenant, “ I will

"be a God to thee and thy seed," implies, that they were to stand in a peculiar relation to God, as his church; who were to be subject to peculiar laws and ordinances, by observing which, they declared on their part, That they were his People. This promise contains also the sum of new covenant blessings. The promises and ordinances did appertain only to the church; of which all who had an interest in the covenant were members. Infants, therefore, being expressly included in the covenant, were always looked upon as of the people of God; and were to receive the distinguishing token of a covenant dedication to him.

Nor was this covenant, with its ordinances and privileges, ever limited to Abraham and his natural posterity; and particularly that article which takes the infant seed into the church with the parents, was not any peculiar privilege of the native Hebrews: nor was circumcision appointed as the token of a peculiar interest in those temporal blessings, which were granted exclusively to the natural seed of Abraham, as some would pretend. For it appears that by the express direction of God, some were to have the token of the covenant and of church membership for themselves and their children, who were neither the natural descendants of Abraham, nor were with them to inherit the land of Canaan. When circumcision was first instituted, not only Abraham, with his son Ishmael, but all the males of his family were ordered to have this token of admission into the visible church. And it was a standing rule, that bought servants, and children born in the house, should be circumcised. And the Old Testament church did receive proselytes from the Gentiles; and this token of their interest in the covenant of Abraham was accordingly administered to them and their children: who were thereupon subjects of church ordinances and privileges. But this their interest in the covenant of Abraham gave them no right of inheritance with the native Israelites in the land of Canaan. Which I think is a clear proof that the covenant with  
Abraham,

Abraham, to which circumcision was annexed, was not any mere national covenant, conveying peculiar temporal privileges to him and his posterity, but it could be no other than God's new and gracious covenant; by the revelation of which, those who professedly consented to it, with their children, were constituted his visible church and people, and were the regular subjects of the ordinances appertaining to its outward administration.

The Abrahamic covenant, we see, did comprehend both parents and their infant children, constituting them members of the visible church. And not only the natural children of Abraham, but many among the Gentiles, upon their becoming proselytes, professing the faith and religion of the church, they and their infant children had an interest in the covenant of Abraham, and were to be received into the visible church by the initiating rite. They were adopted into the family of Abraham, and "the blessing of Abraham" came upon the Gentiles," and he was "made the father of many nations," long before the gospel dispensation took place, and before the dissolution of the national hierarchy of the Jews, which was a middle wall of partition between them and the Gentiles. Even before this wall was taken away, there was a door left open in it, to receive all of every nation, who would join themselves to the God of Abraham, and take hold of his covenant.

The church having been constituted according to the covenant with Abraham, it must be allowed, that during its continuance, the children are as evidently in covenant, and of the church, and subjects of the initiating ordinance, as any others. If then it shall appear that this covenant stands now in force, and that the gospel church is in and under it, and enjoys all its privileges without any abridgment; the right of infants to church membership will stand upon the same firm basis that it did under the Old Testament.

But our opponents deny "that baptism comes in the room of circumcision." And if we should suppose

pose with them, that it does not, it would be no proof but that the covenant itself may remain, though the outward token be laid aside, as it is certain that the same covenant for substance had been revealed to, and administered in the church, long before circumcision was instituted. And if the covenant remain, infants are still fit to be church members, and consequently are the subjects of baptism. But, indeed, it is no better than wrangling, to deny that baptism comes in the room of circumcision: what we mean by the assertion is, that circumcision being abrogated under the gospel dispensation, baptism was instituted to be an outward token of an interest in the new covenant, the sacramental right of admission into the visible church, the sign and badge of membership, even as circumcision had been to the fathers; and in a word, that it answers the like purposes in the gospel church, and is of like mystical and spiritual significancy, as circumcision was under the former dispensation. And this I should think our adversaries can scarcely deny.

Indeed, as circumcision was afterwards annexed to the Horeb covenant, and so became an ordinance of the national church, and worldly sanctuary of the Jews, binding the subjects to the observance of the whole of the Mosaic law, in this relation and respect, it must of course have ceased with the other Jewish ordinances, when that old covenant was abrogated. And if our opponents only mean to deny, that baptism comes in the room of circumcision, considered as a Mosaic ordinance, we shall not contend with them. But it should be remembered, that circumcision had been appointed as a token of the Abrahamic covenant, long before the Horeb covenant and national constitution of the church had a being. And I shall shew, that the Abrahamic covenant was the very same that the gospel church is now under; and that it never was annulled.

It is objected, "That the apostle has declared, that the covenant, which was the foundation of the Jewish church, of which infants were members, is waxed old, and vanished away," Heb. viii. 8, 9. I answer,

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The covenant which the Apostle says was ready to vanish, was that which God made with the fathers, in the day that he took them by the hand, to lead them out of Egypt ; that is, the covenant at Horeb. But that covenant, which is the foundation of infant church membership, had been revealed to Abraham hundreds of years before ; and the Apostle does not say, that this had waxed old, or was annulled ; but the contrary. Infants were indeed members of the national hierarchy of the Jews, which is abolished. But they had been church members long before this national church was formed ; nor was the foundation of their membership shaken, when that dispensation was taken away.

Let it then be considered, that the covenant of Abraham, containing a charter of privileges for the church, and the right of membership for infant children, being an undoubted privilege granted in this covenant ; it must be presumptuous and injurious for any to deny that this covenant stands in force, or to pretend that infants are now cut off from this right and privilege, unless they can prove, that God has taken away this covenant, or at least has cancelled that article, which is the foundation of infant church membership. But there is no intimation in the scriptures that this covenant is annulled, or that infants are cut off from their interest in it. The old covenant which the Apostle says was vanishing, was the covenant made with the Israelites, when God led them out of Egypt. But of the abolishing that covenant which constitutes infants church members, there is nothing to be found in the whole bible. And, till it can be proved to be abolished, it must be considered and held as valid as ever.

The Apostles are so far from teaching, that Christ has annulled God's gracious covenant with the fathers, or taken away any of the privileges therein granted to them or their children, that Paul asserts the contrary, in Rom. xv. 8, " Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision, for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers." These promises are summarily contained in the covenant with Abraham, that  
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the Lord would be a God to him and his seed ; that he should be a father of many nations ; and that all the nations of the earth should be blessed in him. These promises are all confirmed by Christ. Abraham is the patriarch of the church. He is constituted the father of all them that believe ; of all the people of God, of every nation, who are adopted into his family. Even the Gentiles, who were not his natural descendants, are received into the number, and entitled to the privileges of his children. He is made the father of more nations, than are derived from his blood. All the nations of the earth derive blessings from him, and hold their church privileges under him, as his children and heirs. The covenant with Abraham has, indeed, been accomplished more eminently since Christ confirmed it, than ever before. His family has been larger, and he has been made a father of more nations than ever.— This article of the covenant, which receives the children with the parents into the church, is confirmed, as well as the rest. It would be most unreasonable to think otherwise, when the scriptures never hint that this article is rescinded. And we have, besides, good evidence, that the Christian church has not lost this privilege, but their children are still children of the covenant, to greater advantage than ever.

The Apostle tells us again, “ That the covenant “ with Abraham was confirmed of God in Christ, and “ that the law which was four hundred and thirty years “ after, could not disannul it,” Gal. iii. 17. And will any yet insinuate, that Christ has annulled this covenant, which God confirmed in him ? This would overthrow the Apostle’s argument ; who confutes the error of the Judaizing teachers about justification, by the stability of the Abrahamic covenant ; which would be inconclusive, if that covenant was not in force.

Indeed, the third chapter to the Galatians, and fourth to the Romans are a proof, that the covenant with Abraham abides in force, under the gospel dispensation, and that the Gentile believers, with their children, have an interest in it which can never be evaded.

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The Apostle says, that "They who are of faith, are the children of Abraham, and are blessed with faithful Abraham."\* And being his adopted children, they are heirs. They inherit the blessings of his covenant; and all those privileges of church membership, which were granted to Abraham and his seed, belong to believers. And as it was one covenant privilege of the children of Abraham, to have their infant children taken in with them: this privilege is transmitted by the covenant, to all who are adopted into the family of Abraham; otherwise they are cut off from a part of that inheritance of church privileges, which was entailed upon the children of Abraham. The Apostle adds—"The blessing of Abraham is come upon the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ."† Which is, as if he had said, the blessings and privileges granted in the covenant with Abraham, belong and are conveyed to the Gentile church. The very same privileges without any diminution, both for them and their children. "If ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."‡ Whatever privileges were by the covenant and promise of God granted to the children and heirs of Abraham, whether for themselves or their seed, the Christian Gentiles are entitled to. For they are also declared to be the children and heirs of Abraham. To the same purpose the Apostle writes in the fourth chapter to the Romans, quoting those words of the covenant, "I have made thee a father of many nations,"|| as a proof, that Gentile believers are the children of Abraham; and consequently are comprehended in the covenant and church, together with their offspring.

Again, in Eph. iii. 6, we read, "That the Gentiles are fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ, by the gospel." That is, they are fellow-heirs with the Jews of the blessing and covenant of Abraham, they are admitted to that inheritance of spiritual privileges, which God's covenant and promise

\* Gal. iii. 7. 9. † Verse 14. ‡ Gal. iii. 29. || Rom. iv. 16, 17.

promise conveyed to his descendants; they are of the same body the church, which was formed by this covenant; and partakers of the promise; that same promise of the covenant which had been the great privilege of the church all along, and was expressly to them and their children.

But, let us once more hear what the scripture says. When those, who were pricked in their hearts, on the day of Pentecost, said to Peter and the rest of the Apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter said unto them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is to you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call," Acts ii. 37, 38, 39. That it was the covenant with Abraham, that is here called the promise, will appear from the following considerations: 1. This covenant is commonly in the New Testament called the Promise, by way of distinction and eminency. See Rom. iv. 13, 14. "For the promise, that he should be heir of the world, was not to Abraham or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For, if they which are of the law, be heirs, faith is made void, and the Promise of none effect. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end that the Promise might be sure to all the seed, not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all." Gal. iii. 17, &c. "The covenant which was before confirmed of God in Christ, the law which was 430 years after cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by Promise. If ye are Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the Promise." Once more. Gal. iv. 28, "We, as Isaac, are children of the Promise."

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In all these places, and in divers others, the covenant with Abraham is called the Promise ; which shews that it was commonly so stiled. 2. If we compare this text with Acts iii. 25, we shall find the promise there explained, to mean the covenant with Abraham. For the Apostle, there addressing the Jews, to persuade them to repent and be converted, in like manner as he had done on the day of Pentecost, proposes the very same encouragement to them in these words : “ Ye are “ the children of the covenant which God made with “ our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed “ shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.” His telling them, that “ they were the children of Abraham’s covenant,” is to the same purpose exactly, as if he had told them, that the Promise was to them and their children. For this covenant was undoubtedly to the parents and their infant children. And their being declared children of the covenant, signified that they were heirs to the privileges of the covenant. So that these texts are exactly parallel, and explain each other. The same Apostle, preaching to the same sort of hearers (that is, the Jews) proposes the same argument in different words, even their interest in the promise, or covenant with Abraham, in order to enforce the same exhortation, viz. Repentance and conversion for the remission of sins. So that we cannot reasonably doubt, whether the promise here spoken of, be not the covenant with Abraham, if we will allow the Apostle to explain his own words. 3. What the Apostle here says of the promise, agrees exactly in every particular, with the Abrahamic covenant, which had all along included the posterity of Abraham and their infant children, together with the Gentiles that were afar off, even as many of them, as the Lord did from time to time call into his church, and who, in obedience to his call, became proselytes, or Comers, as the word properly signifies. All who, upon the divine call, came from afar to join themselves to the Lord, and his people, were received, together with their children, into the church and covenant by circumcision ; and the pro-

mise was to them and their children also, as has been observed. The covenant of Abraham did belong to all those who were in, and of the church. Peter's hearers, with their children, being actual members in the church, did not need a new call into the church, in order to their being the children of the covenant and promise. But, with the Gentiles who are afar off, and out of the church, the case was otherwise. They must first be called in, and become proselytes, before the promise would be to them and theirs. But so many as were thus called, and admitted into the family of Abraham, had an interest in the covenant and promise, as well as the Jews. Thus the case had stood all along according to the Abrahamic covenant; and thus the case stood upon the day of Pentecost, as Peter says.—Which shews that it was this covenant that Peter had in his eye, when he said, “The promise is to you and “your children:” that his words are therefore to be explained according to the tenor of the Abrahamic covenant; that this covenant, which is the foundation of infant church membership, was not then abolished; but stood in force: and I presume no one will say it has been abolished since.

In this manner Peter's hearers must have understood his words. They had been born and bred in that church and covenant, which included both parents and children. They knew that infants had always been acknowledged as church members, ever since a church had been formed in the world. The idea of a church which should not admit the children with the parents, would have been as new and strange to them, as a church that would not admit females, would be to us. A promise, or covenant, conveying privileges to them and their children, would be naturally understood by them in the same manner as those promises in the Old Testament, which so often occur in the same form of expression, had constantly been taken; and particularly the promise to Abraham, which was the most eminent and fundamental. They would as naturally conclude, that their young children are immediately respected, as we should

should conclude ours to be in an instance of the  
privileges to which we are entitled. Now as the words of the  
Apostle would carry this meaning most fully and  
obviously to the understanding of his hearers; and as  
the same form of expression elsewhere is constantly to  
be thus understood, no reason appears why it may  
not be taken here in the same sense. In all  
reason be received as the true interpretation. And if  
this promise belonged to the infant children of the in-  
churched and covenanted Jews, at the day of Pentecost,  
none will deny that it still belongs to the children of  
the Gentiles, who were afar off; even as many as it  
pleases the Lord to call into his gospel church.

This promise Peter holds up to the Jews, as a war-  
rant or reason why they should be baptized in the  
name of Christ. Repent and be baptized; for the pro-  
mise is to you, &c. Now if their interest in the pro-  
mise was a good reason why they should be baptized,  
as the Apostle asserts; then their children's having an  
interest in the promise with them (as is also asserted)  
is as good a reason for their being baptized; even as  
an interest in the covenant was a reason for circumcisi-  
on to Abraham and his children.

This text is then a substantial proof that the covenant  
of Abraham stood in force, after the gospel dispensation  
took place: since this appears to be that very promise  
which Peter addresses to his hearers. And we see that  
that particular clause, which contains a grant of the  
privilege of church membership to the children of God's  
people, was not taken out, when "Christ the minister  
of the circumcision confirmed by his death the pro-  
mises made to the fathers." We then, and all others,  
whom God shall call into his church, together with our  
children, as the adopted children and heirs of Abraham,  
have an interest in this promise; are members of the  
gospel church; and the proper subjects of Christian  
baptism.

Some say, "that the Promise here spoken of, was  
not the covenant with Abraham, but the promise of  
the pouring out of the Spirit, in Joel." But how

This is what the Apostle says, that the prophecy of Joel foretold those miraculous gifts of the Spirit, speaking with tongues, and prophesying, which appeared on the day of Pentecost? Are these gifts promised to, and conferred upon all, whom the Lord shall call? Besides, I have proved, that the promise here mentioned was the covenant with Abraham; and till the reasons adduced are shewn to be without weight, it is folly to set up an unproved assertion in opposition to them. But whatever the promise may be supposed to be, it belonged to Peter's hearers, and their children, as he says; and he holds it up to them as a reason for their being baptized. It must therefore be a reason for the baptism of their children also. If the gift of the Holy Ghost was promised to them, it was to their children. And they were to be considered as subjects of baptism on account of the promise; not because the gifts of the Spirit were manifest in them, but in order to their receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost. For it is to be observed, that the gift of the Holy Ghost is proposed as the consequence, and not the pre-requisite of baptism. "Be baptized, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

But to give this plea the greatest advantage, let us suppose that the pouring out of the Spirit in his ordinary sanctifying influences, is the matter of that promise in Joel, though Peter explains it otherwise: and that this is the promise, which he in this text proposes to his hearers, as respecting them and their children, though we have seen him explain himself otherwise. Our argument from these words, would yet stand good. For the promise of the sanctifying Spirit being included in the blessing, we may hence infer, that they to whom this promise belongs, are interested in the covenant and blessing of Abraham, and may properly be recognized as of the church and people of God.

It is further said, "That the children to whom the promise belongs, are not infants, but adults—the posterity of the Jews." But though adults are the children of their parents, yet infants too are doubtless children.

children. What warrant then have any to deny, that they have an interest in that promise, which is to the children indefinitely, without any exception of infants?

But the evasion which is most insisted on, is, "That the promise is restrained to those only whom the Lord shall call: and infants give no evidence of their being called." But this will not bear examination. I have already shewn, that this promise was the covenant with Abraham, and is therefore to be explained according to the tenor of that covenant, which included him and his children, and so many of the Gentiles as God should from time to time call into his church. The calling of Abraham was a sufficient call to all his posterity, to give them a visible interest in the covenant, and standing in the church, till they forfeited and were cut off from this privilege. The restraining clause, therefore, only respected those who were not yet called into the church of God, and not those Jews and their children who were then actual members and children of the covenant. Repentance and Baptism in the name of Christ, were required to prevent their being cut off from the covenant and family of Abraham; but the promise was then to them and their children. There is a plain reason why the promise should respect only so many of those who are without, as the Lord should call into his church. But how absurdly would the Apostle speak, according to the interpretation which the Antipedobaptists put upon his words.—"The promise is to you and your children. But neither you nor your children, appear at present to have any interest in it; and no one knows, that they ever will have. You are not to imagine that either you or your children are entitled to any privilege by it, more than belongs to every man and child in the world. All that I mean is, that the promise will belong to those who shall be called. If this should prove to be the case with any of you, or of your children, or any other person, then, and not till then, the promise will be to you and them." If this be all that is intended, it had been much more

plainly expressed by only saying, "The promise will be to those whom the Lord shall call." To what purpose is all this flourish of words, without meaning?—What end can this particular mention of them, and their children, as interested in the promise, serve, unless to persuade them, that some special privilege belonged to them, while there was nothing at all in it? It is either insignificant or fallacious; and would convey to the understanding of the hearers either no meaning, or a false one.

Suppose it were declared, that all the privileges contained in our frame of government belonged to the native subjects and their children, and also to foreigners, even as many as the government should naturalize: and some one pretending to give the sense of this declaration should contend, that according to it, neither the native subjects, nor their children, had a right to any of these privileges, unless they should be first naturalized by an act of the government; would he not be thought ridiculously absurd? The adversaries of infant church membership are equally absurd and unreasonable, in their way of explaining the Apostle's words.

The argument from this text we have so long been considering, cannot be evaded. And we may further add, that since it is on all hands allowed to have been a great privilege of the Jewish infants, that they were in the covenant and church of God; if the infants of Christians are left out of the church, as some teach, then the gospel church is deprived of an important privilege, which the Jewish church enjoyed: and its constitution is less favourable to infants. But can we believe that the gospel dispensation has diminished the privileges of the church in any instance; or that it has put any class of mankind, whether infants or adults, in a more disadvantageous state than before; depriving them, without any fault of theirs, of their standing in the church of God, which is acknowledged to have been an important privilege? This ought not to be supposed, unless clear and positive proof of it could be produced. But no such proof has been or can be found.

found. Wherefore, to bring this argument to a point—the privilege of church membership has certainly been granted to the infant children of God's professing people; which grant stands in force till it be revoked. Our opponents have often been called upon to produce an authentic act of revocation, and the demand is reasonable. This they cannot do. On the contrary, we demonstrate, that this grant has not been revoked, but is renewed, confirmed, and ratified in the gospel.

As a proper appendix to what has thus far been discoursed of the interest of infants in the visible church covenant, I shall just mention that common argument from baptism succeeding in the room of circumcision; but shall not enlarge upon it. As infants were the subjects of circumcision, and were recognized and marked as the people of God by this rite, the conclusion is very natural and reasonable, that if baptism comes in the place of circumcision, as the token of admission into the church, infants are the proper subjects of this ordinance; unless God has declared to the contrary, which can never be made to appear. It is indeed denied by our opponents, that baptism does come in the place of circumcision. But I cannot find that they have explained themselves distinctly, how far, and in what respect, they mean to deny it. I own that baptism does not answer all the same purposes under the gospel dispensation, that circumcision did under the Mosaic. It does not introduce the subjects into a national church, and worldly sanctuary. It has not a typical respect to the Saviour to come. It is not a yoke of bondage, obliging to the observance of the carnal ordinances of the law of Moses. And our opponents, if they will be ingenuous and reasonable, must allow that baptism does, in many respects, come in the place of circumcision. It answers similar ends in the gospel church; and is of the same general signification; and is to be applied to the same subjects; and has even the same name given to it; and upon the institution of baptism, as an ordinance of standing and universal obligation, circumcision was no longer the token.

token of admission into the visible church, as it had been before. And this is all we mean, when we assert that baptism succeeds to circumcision.

As circumcision was the outward token of the covenant, and of admission into the church; so baptism is the outward token of church membership, and of an interest in the new covenant; which, I have proved, is substantially the same with that of Abraham, to which circumcision was annexed. They are both the appointed outward sign and badge of the people of God. As circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith to Abraham, so is baptism to Christians.

Again, circumcision and baptism, though different in external rites, are alike in their spiritual signification. They both pointed out our native corruption, and need of purification, by an inward and spiritual renovation. They both signified cleansing from the guilt and defilement of sin by the blood of Christ, an admission into the church, a dedication to God, an obligation to walk in his commandments and ordinances, and a right to covenant privileges.

It is further to be observed, that the Apostle calls Christians the Circumcision under the gospel; which was the common appellation of those who had, under the former dispensation, received the token of induction into the church. A sufficient intimation that the one takes the place of the other.

Accordingly, circumcision ceased to be longer the token of church membership, after Christ sent out his Apostles to preach and baptize in his name, when baptism was made the standing rite of admission into the gospel church.

For these reasons, we cannot but consider baptism as taking that place in the gospel economy, in which circumcision stood under the old dispensation; though we readily allow that each of these ordinances had some peculiar ends and significations, suited to the different states of the church, in which they were respectively in force; in respect of which peculiarities, they may not properly be parallel. And hence we argue, that  
since

since circumcision and baptism are manifestly similar in their main ends, uses, and significancies; infants are as proper subjects of baptism, as they were of circumcision; and that the divine order for administering the one ordinance to them, warrants our administering that other ordinance that comes in its room. And the argument is not only popular, but of real weight; though I do not lay the greatest stress upon it.

It is objected, "That the outward rites are very unlike." But I can see no weight in this. The different states of the church under the Old and New Testament might require this difference of outward administration respecting the initiating rite.

It is further objected, "That the subjects of baptism and circumcision were different. Circumcision was to be administered only to males, baptism to both sexes." I answer, The circumcision of the males was the appointed token of church membership to the people of God of both sexes. The females were accounted of the circumcision; and were admitted to the holy ordinances which were interdicted to the uncircumcised and unclean.

It is objected again, "That baptism was in use and force before circumcision was abolished." I answer, Though baptism was administered by John, and the disciples of Christ, a short time before circumcision was abolished, yet this no more proves that the former succeeds not in the room of the latter, than Solomon's reigning with his father a short time, is a proof that he did not succeed and reign in his stead. But though baptism was in use before, it was not fully established as the rite of induction into the church, till the mission of the Apostles; after which, circumcision was no longer required for that purpose, as it had been before; though for other reasons it continued in use among the believing Jews some years longer.

It is further inquired, "What need there was that those who had been circumcised should be baptized, if they are both ordinances of the same use and significance?" I answer, It was the will of Christ, that

that all his disciples should receive the new token and badge of church membership, although they had been admitted members of the Old Testament church. And such as would not recognize themselves as his disciples, were to be rejected, and unchurched, and be as branches broken off by their unbelief. Their circumcision became uncircumcision, and the token of their being the people of God became null and void.

To these scriptural arguments in favour of infant church membership, I shall add another consideration, which seems to me to have great weight.

The Jews certainly knew that their infants had an interest in the covenant of Abraham, and had always been acknowledged, received, and recognized by circumcision, as being of the church and people of God. If the Apostles had taught that infants were no longer to have an interest in God's covenant, or be members of the church, or receive any token of their being the people of God; the doctrine must have been new, strange, very shocking, and offensive to the Jews. They must certainly have taken notice of it, and been greatly displeased at it. They opposed the Apostles with all their might, and did all in their power to render them odious, and set the people against them and their new doctrine. They were ready to take offence, and wanted neither wit nor will to lay hold of and exaggerate a plausible and popular objection. Such an objection they would have had, if the Apostles had denied that their children were to be church members any longer. They would not have borne such a doctrine, which declared all their children excommunicated and cut off from the church and people of the Lord, and to have no part in him; but would certainly have urged the objection with a vehemence. And the Apostles must have seen, that it highly concerned them to answer the objection, and take up so dangerous a stumbling block, if their doctrine had given so obvious and fair a handle to their enemies against them. But we have no hint in the New Testament, or any author, Jewish, Christian, or Heathen, that

that ever I could find or learn, that the Jews ever made any such objection to the Apostles, or their doctrine; or that the Apostles ever attempted either to obviate or silence it, or said one word about it: which is certainly a most violent presumption, and may almost pass for plenary evidence, that the Apostles did not, by denying the right of church membership of infants, furnish an obvious occasion and ground for any such objection.

I shall mention but one argument more, grounded upon the History of Infant Baptism, and the practice of the church from the apostolic age, according to the testimony of the earliest writers. The fact, in short, is found to stand thus: 1. That the validity and lawfulness of infant baptism appears not to have ever been denied by any Christians till about the year 1130; and then only by one Peter de Bruis in France, with his followers, a small sect, which held withal, that no infants were saved, and divers other gross errors, as historians report. It soon dwindled to nothing. After which, there cannot be found a single instance, well vouched, of a person opposing infant baptism (except such as denied water baptism) till the Anabaptists sprang up in Germany about 250 years ago. To this purpose we have the testimony of Doctor Wall, a learned, diligent, and faithful writer on the subject, in his History of Infant Baptism. These are his words, “ For the first 400 years there appears only one man, Tertullian, that advised the delay of infant baptism in some cases, and one Gregory that did perhaps practice such delay in the case of his children; but no society so thinking, or so practicing, nor any one man saying that it was unlawful to baptize infants. In the next 700 years, there is not so much as one man to be found, that either spoke for, or practised such delay, but all the contrary. And when about the year 1130, one sect among the Waldenses declared against the baptizing of infants, as being incapable of salvation, the main body of that people rejected their opinion; and “ they

“ they of them that held that opinion, quickly dwindled away, and disappeared; there being no more heard of holding that tenet, till the rising of the German Antipedobaptists, in the year 1522.” Thus far Dr. Wall. To this our opponents have hitherto found nothing to oppose, worthy of credit, except some testimonies to the practice of baptizing adults; which are nothing to the purpose; since no one doubts that unbaptized adults, as well as infants, are the subjects of baptism. Or if any have been found speaking against the baptism of infants, they have appeared to be such as were against all water baptism.

2. On the other hand, we have the express testimony of the learned Christian writers, who lived within one, two, and three hundred years of the Apostles, that infant baptism was not only then commonly practised in the church, but had been received and practised from the Apostles; and that none were known of, among all the numerous sects of Christians, pretending to deny it.

The testimonies of the fathers to this purpose, are commonly known by those who are moderately versed in this controversy. Justin Martyr, who wrote about 40 years after the Apostles, mentions expressly some aged Christians, who were made disciples in, or from their infancy. And though he mentions not their infant baptism, his words fairly imply it. For if they were made disciples in infancy, they were doubtless the subjects of baptism. Irenæus, who is said to have been born in the apostolic age, mentions the baptism of infants. He calls it, indeed, their regeneration;—but so baptism was commonly termed by the ancient fathers, as all who are versed in their writings know and acknowledge (i. e. in a figurative sense, as admitting them into the visible church.) Tertullian, who lived within 100 years of the Apostles, speaks of the baptizing of infants as a practice of the church; but advises to the delay of it, except in cases of necessity; though he has nothing to say against the validity and lawfulness

lawfulness of it. He advises also the delay of baptism to adults, till they were married, or confirmed in continency. Though he was singular and whimsical in his opinion, yet he may well be admitted as a credible witness, that infant baptism was a common practice in the church at that time. And this is all the use we mean to make of any of the testimonies we shall produce.

Origen, who also lived within 100 years after the Apostles, and was one of the most learned and knowing men of the age, declares, that infants are, by the usage of the church, baptized. And that an order for the baptizing infants, had been delivered to the church, from the Apostles, who knew that the pollution of sin is in all.

Cyprian, who lived but little more than 100 years after the Apostles, gives as full a testimony as possible to the practice of infant baptism at the time he lived. At a council of 66 ministers, held about 150 years after the Apostles, it was debated, whether it would not be proper to delay the baptizing of infants, till the eighth day, according to the law of circumcision. [Note, it appears they considered baptism as coming in the room of circumcision.] They were unanimously of opinion, that there was no reason for any such delay.

WE are now to consider the objections.

And the first is, "that there is no command in scripture for baptizing infants, nor can it be proved, that the Apostles baptized any such. We have express accounts of the baptism of men and women; but that infants were, or ought to be admitted as subjects of this ordinance, the scripture saith not. How can this be a divine ordinance, when there is neither precept nor precedent for it?"

I answer, If it any way appears from the scripture, that infants are subjects of baptism, it matters not whether this doctrine be grounded on an express precept or example, or whether it be taught in some other way. Is it not presumption for us to say, that we will not be-

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lieve this to be the mind of Christ, unless he has revealed it in the particular way that we may pitch upon? The question should be, whether we can find, or gather from the scriptures any Sufficient evidence, that infants are to be baptized. If the reasons on which our doctrine and practice is grounded, be good and conclusive, we ought to acquiesce in them. It never can be proved, either by scripture or reason, that consequential evidence is insufficient to determine our judgment and practice, in matters of religion; or that every part of God's revealed will is delivered in exprefs propositions.

Since the scriptures plainly acknowledge and assert the right of membership of infants in the gospel church, that they are of the number of Christ's disciples, that they are holy, and have an interest in God's gracious covenant; and since it is owned by all, that, according to the order and rule of the gospel, all those who are disciples, holy, and in the covenant, are the proper subjects of baptism: the consequence is clear, that infants are to be baptized. And this is equivalent to an exprefs order for it. It is as plain and valid a warrant, though it be consequential, as an exprefs order would be.

We have also such precedents in favour of our practice, as, though they may be cavilled at, must, I think, be of great weight with every unbiaſſed man; precedents which seem to render it morally certain, that infant baptism was practised by the Apostles. Three whole families we read of, who were baptized. If there were any children under the age of discretion in any of these families, they were certainly admitted. Now, though it be not said whether there were any such children, yet it can scarce be doubted that there were, when the following circumstances are well considered. 1. If we should take three families among us, promiscuously, I suppose the probability would be, at least, fifty to one, that there would be young children in some of them. 2. It is not said, or intimated, that there were no such children in these families. But if  
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it had been the case that there were no children in these houses, and if children ought not to be baptized, there was great reason and necessity that so important and uncommon a circumstance should be mentioned, to prevent a dangerous mistake, which these accounts, left as they stand, would naturally lead men into. For the baptism of these families would naturally be considered as precedents for baptizing other families, in which there were infants. And as the constant and known practice of the church for thousands of years, and the declarations of Christ and his Apostles, were in favour of infant church membership; how reasonable must it needs appear to practise household baptism, unless it were plainly testified and guarded against? In short, we have express precedents, or examples, if not of infant baptism, yet of household baptism, infants not excepted; and that too upon the faith or profession of the head of the family. For it is to be carefully noted, that in these accounts it is not said, or intimated, that all in these families were baptized on a personal profession of faith; but only, that the head of the family believed, and thereupon was baptized with all the house. And upon the authority of these precedents of family baptism, in conjunction with the other grounds which have been mentioned, we assert and claim the right of household baptism, on behalf of the families of believers, infants not excepted. And we challenge those who will not admit them, to produce an authentic order or precedent for this their refusal.

As the gospel, though it has changed the initiating sacrament, continues infants in the same standing in the church, which it was well known they had had all along; it is nothing strange that we have not more express orders and precedents touching infant baptism—What need of new precepts and examples to ascertain a point, which had in effect been long since settled; which all understood, and all agreed in? But how infinitely strange would it be, if infants, who had from the beginning been of the church, by the appointment of God,

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and the subjects of the initiating ordinance, should be cast out of the church, and cut off from the people of God, without any order or precedent for it in scripture? And yet this we must believe, if we deny their right to church membership and baptism. For certainly there is neither order nor precedent for excluding them from the church, or from the initiating rite.

If the Apostles had refused to admit infants into the gospel church by baptism, we should, without all peradventure, have had a plain order not to receive them. The case was such as must, in all reason, have required it. Such a great and important change in the constitution of the church, as would cut off a great part of those who had always been acknowledged to be in the church and covenant of God, must have seemed strange to the Jewish converts; who would naturally have expected that their children were still to be received with them, as heretofore; and would, accordingly, have moved to have them baptized; as the ancient Jewish writers attest was commonly practised at the admission of proselytes. At least, they would have inquired, whether the gospel church admitted infants as well as adult believers; which must have given occasion for a plain and express determination of the point, if so great and striking an innovation was to be established. And it would be of great necessity that such a decree should be promulgated and recorded, as a standing rule or canon, to be observed by all the churches. But nothing like this appears in any writings, sacred or profane. We may therefore retort the argument upon our adversaries thus: since infants had always been received as church members, by the initiating rite, they who refuse still to receive them, ought to be able to produce plain orders or precedents for this their refusal: which since they cannot do, we conclude that the right of church membership still belongs to them, and that they are subjects of baptism.

There was not that occasion for an express mention of the baptism of infants, as of women; for as women had hitherto been admitted to the privileges of church membership,

membership, without being circumcised, it might well be doubted, whether baptism, the sacrament of admission into the gospel church, was to be administered to females. To remove this scruple, we have express precedents of female baptism; shewing that persons of either sex are alike proper subjects of this ordinance. But there was no room to doubt, whether the token of church membership were to be applied to infants; nor had it ever been called in question.—And yet the New Testament furnishes clear proofs that they are members of the gospel church; and express precedents of household baptism, without exception of infants; as has been shewn; nor is there any thing of weight to be urged against it.

If, after all that has been said, the want of more express orders or precedents for infant baptism stick as a scruple in the minds of any, let the following considerations be added to what has been said. 1. Is it not as strange, and more so, that we have but one express example of infant circumcision in all the Old Testament, and not one among the Israelites? And yet, no doubt, it was practised every day. Is it not strange, that there is neither express precept nor example, in the New Testament of women's coming to the Lord's supper? And yet, no doubt, they did so commonly. Jesus, it seems, baptized more disciples than John, John iv. 1. Is it not strange that none of the writers of the New Testament, except John, give the least hint that he baptized at all, though John's baptizing is often mentioned by almost all of them? These instances may shew, how little such a negative argument is to be depended on in the present case. 2. Is it not a manifest sign of prejudice and an unfair mind, to think there is no sufficient warrant for infant baptism, unless there be express orders or precedents for it; and yet refuse to receive infants into the church, though there be neither precept nor precedent to warrant or justify our refusing them that privilege, with which they were invested by God, and held it without dispute thousands of years? Is not this to strain at a gnat and swallow a

camel? 3. Does it become us to disregard, and refuse to admit such evidence as must be acknowledged to be of weight, and stand cavilling, that the case might have been made plainer? I grant it might, if God had pleased. And so might many other truths, which yet we have sufficient reason to believe. Our opponents must own, that if infant baptism be contrary to the mind of Christ, this would have been much plainer, had there been an express order against it; and much dispute and trouble would have been prevented. The case is left just as plain as Christ has thought fit it should be. And it belongs not to us to object, that the evidence is not such as we should like best; but to inquire seriously, humbly, and prayerfully, what is truth; and thankfully to close with it, upon any good evidence of it that we can find. 4. Let me ask the objector, What he would have? What proof would satisfy him? Would it give satisfaction, if the order had run thus: "Go teach all nations, baptizing them, and their children?" You could as easily and fairly evade this, as you do the express proofs we bring of infant church membership. Christ says expressly, that the kingdom of heaven is, or consists of little children; and it is not denied, that the kingdom of heaven is the church; yet we are told, that these little children, which are of the church, are not infants, but adults, resembling little children in humility. The Apostle says expressly, that the children of believers are holy. A character never once given in scripture to any but church members: yet this avails nothing. A new sense, unknown in the scriptures, is invented, and put upon the word, though it makes nonsense of the text. We bring express scripture to prove, that the promise is to the children, as well as the parents; that believers are accounted the children and heirs of Abraham, according to the promise; and that his blessing is come upon the Gentiles: and the right of church membership for his natural posterity, was certainly one article of this blessing. Yet our opponents go on against all this evidence, upon no better foundation than their own arbitrary

trary conjectures and hypothesis. While men are in this humour, what confidence can we have, that, if there had been an express order for infant baptism, they would not set their inventions to work to explain it away? And we might be told, that the children to be baptized are such as are capable of professing faith; or that they are such as resemble infants in humility; or that they are spiritual children, who imitate the faith of the first converts; or that they are to be baptized after they have been first taught, and have given evidence of their faith or repentance, &c. In short, a fair and honest mind will embrace the truth upon any sufficient proof, whether direct or consequential. But when the integrity of the mind is corrupted and distorted, by prejudices, and fondness for particular schemes, the light that is in men becomes darkness; and ways will be found to ward off conviction, for the most part, by any arguments whatever. I have considered this objection the more largely, because, though it has really no weight in it, yet it is apt enough to amuse and puzzle weak and simple minds, and to breed scruples, which sometimes prove very troublesome and hurtful.

It is said by some, "That it is not being in the covenant, or church, that gives a right to baptism; but a divine order to that purpose."

But to what purpose is this said, except to raise a dust, and keep up a fruitless altercation? You acknowledge that it is according to the order and rule of the gospel, that all those be received as the subjects of baptism, who have visibly an interest in the covenant and appear to be such as are to be received into the gospel church. Whether, therefore, their being visibly in covenant or of the church gives them the right to baptism or not; yet, by your own acknowledgment it proves, or evidences an unquestionable right thereto.—The allegation in the objection is, indeed, most unreasonable: but if we should admit it, for argument sake, the right of church membership of infants being proved, their right to baptism is undeniable, as long as it  
is

is allowed that all such are the proper subjects of baptism.

Another principal objection is, that “ according to  
 “ the gospel order, faith and repentance, or at least a  
 “ credible profession thereof, are required of all previ-  
 “ ously or in order to their being baptized. The Apo-  
 “ stles were first to teach those whom they baptized,  
 “ Matt. xxviii. 19. Christ puts believing before bap-  
 “ tism, when he says, He that believeth, and is bap-  
 “ tized, shall be saved,” Mark xvi. 16. And Peter  
 “ says to the Jews, who being pricked in their hearts,  
 “ asked, what they should do ; “ Repent and be bap-  
 “ tized,” Acts ii. 38. And when the eunuch moved,  
 “ that he might be baptized, Philip said unto him “ If  
 “ thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest,” Acts  
 “ viii. 37. We read also of several, who, agreeably to  
 “ this rule, were baptized, professing their faith and re-  
 “ pentance. If repentance and faith are the necessary  
 “ conditions of baptism, infants cannot be admitted :  
 “ for they make no profession, and give no evidence of  
 “ these qualifications.”

Answer. To shew that this objection is without any weight, we need only open our Bibles, and read the several texts that are brought to support it. Let us take them in their order.

The first is Matt. xxviii. 19. I have before observ-  
 ed, that the proper signification of the Greek is, “ Go  
 “ make all nations disciples (or proselytes) baptizing  
 “ them—teaching them,” &c. as our opponents grant :  
 and this is a good warrant for the baptism of infants,  
 as well as the parents ; and they are therefore to be  
 admitted by the same outward rite. And to say that  
 infants can no otherwise become disciples, than by be-  
 ing taught, is no better than a mean begging of the  
 very point to be proved. Whenever the Apostles made  
 a disciple of the parent, the right and privilege of dis-  
 ciples was given to the children ; who were as such to  
 be baptized, together with the parents, according to  
 the Apostle’s orders, to disciple and baptize all nati-  
 ons.

And

And if we should understand the word here used as signifying to instruct or indoctrinate, there would be no reason for any one to conclude, that infants may not be baptized till they are first taught—No such thing is said, or in the least implied. Christ's disciples are indeed to be taught, as well as baptized; children as well as adults; as far, and as soon as they are capable of it. But that they may not be baptized till after they have been first taught, there is not one word nor iota in the whole paragraph. And to argue from the bare order of the words, that indoctrination is a necessary pre-requisite to baptism in all cases, is to build upon quicksand indeed. For it is well known, that things are often mentioned in scripture in a promiscuous or inverted order.—Nay, if the order of the words were any solid foundation to argue upon, we might, in this way, prove that it was the will of Christ, that the Apostles should make disciples by first baptizing them, and then teaching them. For the instructions Christ gave them when he sent them forth, stand in this order; “Go disciple all nations, baptizing them—teaching them,” &c. But we lay no stress at all upon such precarious arguments. The truth is, some are to be taught before, and in order to their being baptized. Others are by baptism to be introduced into the school of Christ, and put under the discipline of the church before and in order to their being taught. Adults we grant, are to be first taught, and to make a profession of faith, in order to their being baptized; and that for two reasons. 1. They are immediately capable of it. 2. They have no visible right or meetness to be received as members of the church of Christ, till they profess their faith in him. And we may add, that it is not the will of Christ that any such should be taken into his school, without their free consent. On the contrary, there are two reasons why infants should by baptism be received into the church, without their being first taught, and professing their faith. 1. They are not at present capable of it. 2. Their church membership and right to baptism is manifest

nifest without it from the scriptures; as has been shewn. And it is the will of Christ, that they be entered into his school immediately, previous to their actual consent. A profession of faith does not more evidence the right of a believer to baptism, than his infant child's right to the same is evidenced by the scriptures, which declare that "of such is the kingdom of heaven, that the promise is to them, and that they are holy."

This text then contains nothing against infant baptism, and I have elsewhere shewn, that it furnishes a good argument in favour of it. The next passage we have to consider is Mark xvi. 15, 16, "Preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." If this text does not contain so much in favour of infant baptism as the other, yet certainly there is nothing against it. It is true faith and baptism are here required in order to salvation. But whether in order to salvation, faith be required before baptism in all cases, or in any case, is not said; nor can it be proved from this text; which only contains a promise of salvation to those who believe and are baptized. And I presume it will be allowed, that if any one should first be baptized, and afterwards should believe; this promise would belong to him, as really as if he had first believed, and then was baptized.—If any one should be baptized upon a hypocritical profession of faith, and afterwards should become a true believer, he would no doubt be saved; nor would it be required of him that he be again baptized. And though we grant that a profession of faith is required of an unbaptized adult, in order to his being baptized; yet it is an abuse of scripture, to argue that infants are not to be baptized till they believe, because believing is mentioned before baptism in this place, which, by the acknowledgment of our opponents, "speaks only of those who are capable of attending to the preaching of the gospel, and of actual believing." They do not apply to infants the damnatory sentence against unbelievers; and it is equally unreasonable, to  
urge

urge their want of faith, as an objection to their being admitted to baptism.—In short, I can find nothing in these words, that makes the least difficulty in the matter; unless we will be so ridiculously absurd as to imagine, that infants and adult believers cannot both be the subjects of baptism; or that the mention of the one alone, implies the denial of the other.

In Acts ii. 38, Peter exhorts his hearers to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. Those whom he thus exhorts were all adults. For no one preaches to young infants. It is also observable in these words that they were only required to repent in order to be baptized; which is contrary to the opinion of those who renounce infant baptism. They say we must believe as well as repent. We grant that repentance is required of unbaptized adults, in order to their being baptized. But does he so much as hint, that infants are not to be admitted? No. But in the next words asserts, that the same promise which belonged to them, and which he holds up as a warrant and encouragement to them, to repent and be baptized, did also belong to their children. But these words have been before considered.

The same remark is to be made on the words of Philip to the Eunuch, “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest be baptized.” Any Pedobaptist, must, upon his own principles, have said the same, upon the like occasion.

The examples of those who were baptized upon a profession of faith, are sometimes brought as an objection against infant baptism. These, we grant, are a proof that believers are the subjects of baptism. We grant further, that they are no proof that infants are subjects. But it is strange it should ever be thought that these examples make any thing against the baptism of infants. Cannot adult believers be admitted, unless infants be rejected? Is there not room enough in the church for both? A thousand instances of one sort, are no argument against the admission of the other. The truth is, we have not many certain instances

stances of adult baptism mentioned particularly in the New Testament. Several of these were persons of note who had no children. Of others, it appears, that if there were children in their families, as is highly probable, they were baptized with them. And some that are confidently supposed to have been adults, might a great part of them have been infants, for any thing that appears to the contrary; particularly the three thousand added to the church on the day of Pentecost. But among all those, who are said to have been baptized upon a profession of faith, it is remarkable that we find not one that was born of Christian parents, or was, on our principles, a fit subject of baptism in infancy. We have, in the New Testament, the history of the church for thirty years after Christ's ascension, in all which there is not one instance that in the least countenances their practice, who are against the baptism of the children of believers, till they are of age to profess their faith. Wherein they differ from us, they have most certainly neither precept nor example in scripture to support them.

Upon the whole, this objection, which has often been held up with so much parade, is like a vapour; which, beheld at a distance, may look as if there might be something in it; but upon a nearer view, is found to be as light and unsubstantial as the air; while we endeavour to handle it, we can find nothing in it.

It is objected by some, that "Christ was baptized in adult age; and we ought herein to follow his example."

Answer. John's baptism, with which Christ was baptized, was not instituted till Christ was of adult age. How could it be expected that he should have the ordinance administered to him, before it was a divine ordinance? We might as well argue against infant circumcision, because Abraham was circumcised in adult age. But Christ in his infancy was dedicated to God, and received into the number of his people, according to the ordinances then in use: which may serve as a precedent and pattern to Christians to dedicate

cate their children to God in baptism, the rite of induction to the Christian Church. Christ's baptism was the token of his solemn consecration to his public ministry; signifying his anointing with the Holy Ghost to the offices of prophet, priest, and king (and especially as the high priest of his church) which he was to execute; and was accordingly inaugurated at his entering on the public discharge of these his offices, when he was about thirty years of age. There were many peculiar circumstances attending Christ's baptism, which are not imitable by us.

As many people have mistaken the nature and end of Christ's baptism, and have therefore thought it their duty to follow him by being baptized in adult age: For their sake, I shall also make the following remarks.

1. The baptism with which Christ was baptized was not the Christian baptism, as it plainly appears from Acts xix. 3, 4, 5. There we find the Apostles baptized some persons over again, who had been before baptized by John; which they never would have done, if John's baptism had been that of the Christian dispensation.

2. We must observe, when Christ was baptized, he was just then about to enter into his priestly and ministerial office, as the great high priest of his church; and as such he was typified by Aaron and his successors. Now God had positively commanded that Aaron should be admitted into his office by washing or baptism, see Exod. xxix. 4, &c. We also find that this was accordingly done, see Levit. vii. 6. Therefore when our blessed Lord was about to take this office upon him, he went to John to be baptized; and though John was sensible that he had more need to be baptized of Christ, and therefore seemed to draw back from the duty; yet Christ said (in allusion, no doubt, to the command for initiating the high priest by washing or baptism) "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness," all that was typical of me as the high priest of the church. And

“ then he suffered him,” Matt. iii. 13, 14, 15. It is also very remarkable that Jesus Christ, at that time, was about thirty years of age, under which the priests were not to enter on their office. Compare Levit. iv. 3. and Matt. iii. 23.

It is objected, “ That infant baptism is a part of popery, the basis of national churches and worldly establishments; that it unites the church and world, and keeps them together.”

Answer. Infant baptism is grounded on the scriptures; and is commonly practised in those churches that are not, nor ever were subject to the Pope; therefore, it is not a part of Popery, though practised, as divers other ordinances are, in the Roman church.

Infant baptism is not the basis of national churches and worldly establishments. Infants were church members long before there was a national church in the world; which was not till the Horeb covenant. That particular constitution of a church, and form of administration, whereby it becomes national, has no connection with or dependance upon infant baptism. A national church may as well be formed upon the principle of Antipedobaptism as any other. If the church of England should renounce infant baptism, and yet retain its present constitution in other respects, it would still be, and might as well continue, a national church as ever. There may be a national church, though not one half of the nation are of it. And as for worldly establishments of religion, it is too plain to need insisting on, that infant baptism no way affects them. Infant baptism stands as well without, as with human establishments; and human establishments can stand as well without, as with infant baptism.

Infant baptism does not unite the church and the world, and keep them together. If by the world we mean those that are not of the visible church; how can the baptizing the infants of church members unite the church with those that do not belong to it? If by the world be meant professed Christians, who are manifestly unmeet and unworthy of Christian communion,

nion, infant baptism neither unites the church, nor keeps it united with any such. It is owing to the neglect or abuse of discipline, when such remain united with the church. Or if any should mean by the world, visible Christians, who are secretly hypocritical; it is not the will of Christ that the church should be separated from these, till their hypocrisy becomes manifest. Nor would the abolishing of infant baptism make such a separation.

It is objected, " That the answer of a good conscience is required in baptism, in order to its being of saving advantage, 1 Pet. iii. 21. And as infants are incapable of this, they are not subjects of baptism." I answer, Though the answer or engagement of a good conscience must be joined with the outward washing with water, when the subject is capable of it, yet this makes nothing against infant baptism. For if the answer of a good conscience be afterwards annexed to the sacramental washing received in infancy, such a baptism is as valid, and as available to salvation, as if the washing with water, and the answer of a good conscience, had been at the same time. And infants are by their baptism bound to the answer of a good conscience; which they are to recognize and perform, when they are capable of it. Indeed this passage speaks plainly in our favour. For the Apostle compares baptism to the ark of Noah, as being the figure or antitype of it, bearing a resemblance to it. Noah by faith prepared the ark, for the saving of himself and his house. As his children were received with him into the ark, so the children of believers have a right to the church, and are the subjects of baptism, together with their parents; which bears in this respect, the figure and resemblance of the ark.

It is also objected, that " if infants are to be members of the church, and subjects of baptism, they ought also to be admitted to partake of the Lord's supper, which is an ordinance to which all the members of the Christian church have a right. And accordingly

“ cordingly it was customary with the ancient Christi-  
 “ ans, who practised infant baptism, to administer the  
 “ Lord’s supper also to them. And they who disap-  
 “ prove the communicating of infants, should, if  
 “ they would be consistent, disallow the baptizing of  
 “ them.”

Answer. We grant that infants, as church members, have an external right to all the ordinances of the visible church, as far and as soon as they are actually capable of, and meet for them. As they are immediately capable and meet subjects of baptism, they are to be admitted thereto without delay. As soon as they are capable of receiving instruction from the word, they should be brought to give their attendance to it; and when they can so far understand the nature and design of the Lord’s supper, and have such a measure of knowledge and faith, that they can discern the Lord’s body, and examine themselves, and so eat of that bread, and drink of that cup; it is not only their right, but their duty, to do so, without delay. Though an infant may have a right to an estate, of which he is an heir, yet he is not admitted to possess, occupy, and improve it, till he is of capacity for it. And such is the nature and design of the Lord’s supper, that a right attendance on it, requires an actual capacity and present meetness for it; which infants have not. And it is this want of capacity and meetness, and not a want of right to church privileges, that is the reason why we do not admit them. But this reason does not exclude them from baptism; of which they are as capable and meet subjects now, as they were of circumcision formerly. They are capable of the sign, and the thing signified; of coming under the obligations, and having the grace and privileges of the covenant secured and conveyed to them; of being solemnly dedicated to God; recognized and admitted, as his visible church and people. These things they are capable of in infancy. And to signify and effect these, is the design and use of baptism as has been observed.

It

It appears, I trust, that our opponents have no reason to say, as they are wont to do with great confidence, that there is nothing in the scriptures in favour of infant baptism, but they plainly declare against it. We have searched the scriptures, and find nothing at all contrary to infant baptism; and plain proofs that infants are the subjects of baptism. Whether this does not amount to a fair and full proof, let every one who has the reason of a man consider and judge.

We learn also, the error of re-baptizing those, who have been baptized in their infancy. This practice cannot be justified either by precept or example, or any good reasons. Infant baptism administered by sprinkling, we have examined by the scriptures, and find it to be well warranted. To renounce it therefore, and be baptized over again, is utterly wrong. And though we charitably believe that those who have gone into this practice, have done it conscientiously, yet their consciences were therein misguided, and they have entangled themselves by the wrong step they have taken, and given Satan an advantage against them. Having openly renounced communion with all Christians, but those of their own party, they too often appear to be exceedingly hardened against all means that can be used for convincing them of their error; and take it with great scorn and impatience, to have it suggested to them that perhaps they are in a mistake. And if any such suspicions should ever arise in their minds, yet what a strong temptation will they have to wink hard against the light, when it begins to enter into their minds, and to discover to them, what they cannot bear the thoughts of, that in the height of their confidence they have been wrong. It is very unhappy when Christians run themselves into such sad entanglements, and get their scruples and prejudices fixed and rivetted.

*F I N I S.*



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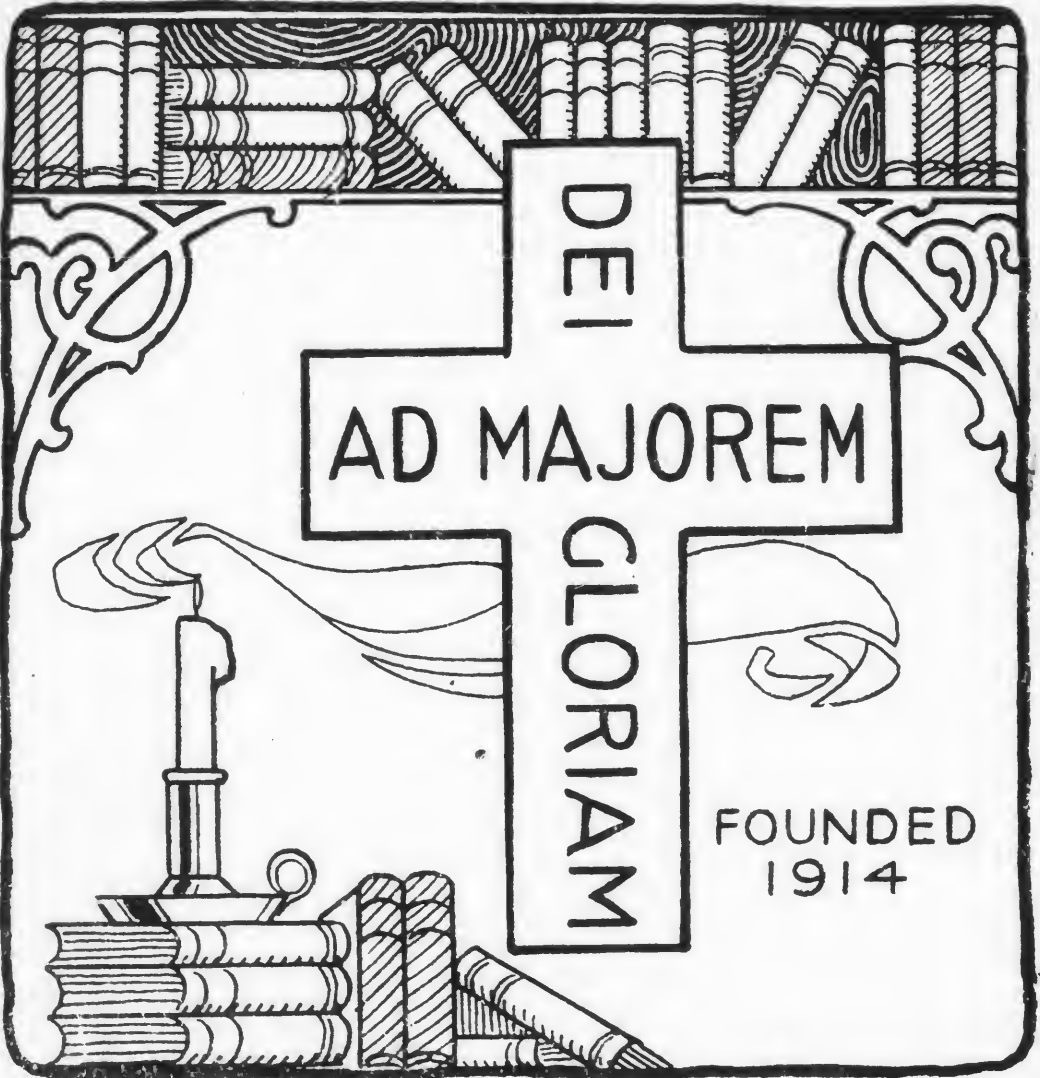
F I N I S.

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guarding a  
to Professors,

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## School of Theology



Class

Accession

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Book

William  
Zimlinda  
Elizabeth  
John  
George  
Mr. William  
Thomas  
Robert T. Sney



Dearest  
love

OHENCO

FOR REFERENCE  
Do Not Take From This Room